DESTROY ALL COMICS

John P. 7/10/95

Featuring interviews with comic book historian Bill Blackbeard, and King-Cat creator John Porcellino, new comics by David Lasky, Garret Izumi & Christian Osborne, Jam, Brian Marsland, Gabby Gamboa, and Eric Searleman, plus lots of reviews.

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SLAVE LABOR graphics

#3

From the desk of... Jeffrey Craig LeVine

Everywhere I turn these days, it seems like people are complaining about the state of the industry...especially in regards to some of the major publishers of the worst comics, signing exclusive deals with certain comics distributors. To tell you the truth, I'm sick of hearing about it, and really don't give a shit. Without a doubt, the most important factor in regards to the future of comics isn't what kind of distribution they're getting, but if they're any fucking good. If people make good comics, they'll get out there, with or without a direct market.

Take John Porcellino for example, who I interviewed for this issue. His comic sells better than many comics published by established companies like Black Eye, Slave Labor Graphics, and Aeon, and it isn't even distributed by any of the major comic book distributors. Another interesting thing about John's comic, King-Cat, is although it sells for only $1.00, he manages to make more profit than a similar selling comic from any of the above-mentioned companies, which usually sell for $2.95. It seems to me that the way most companies are publishing comics could use a little shaking up...a little less business as usual.

For a little historical perspective on comics, and the world, this issue also features an interview Dylan Williams did with comic book historian, Bill Blackbeard. Besides the fascinating text of the interview, Dylan unearthed a lot of great comics and photos to accompany it. My only regret was that I wasn't able to print more of them. If you read about something you're interested in, I hope you'll dig deeper, and seek out more information than space allowed us to include. This is just a little magazine to give you some ideas, obviously not the definitive history of comics.

I'd like to use a little space right now to encourage you to contribute to future issues of Destroy All Comics. Not only are we looking for good comics to run, but we're also looking for interesting articles, and even interviews. Don't write me asking if your ideas are any good, or what kind of article you should write...just write one, and send it in. If it's good, I'll run it. All contributors receive a free copy of this magazine, plus get their ideas and opinions unleashed upon the world. Believe me, it's fun!

Unfortunately, due to being overworked and having a screwed up time table, the next issue of Destroy All Comics won't be out until late December 1995, or early January 1996, so if it seems like a while between this issue and the next, that'll be because it will be a while, so don't panic. Next issue features an interview with Tom Hart, the creator of Hutch Owen's Working Hard, New Hat, and various mini-comics.

I gotta wrap this up...not only do still have a few more pages to finish laying out, and some miscellaneous stuff to type in, but I have to be done with this in just a few more hours, so I can catch the train to drop this off at Slave Labor headquarters, so it can make it to the printer in time, so that it gets printed before my distributors cancel it for being too late.

Please remember, good comics are the most important thing.

Thank you for your attention,

Jeffrey Craig LeVine August 8, 1995

Write to: 1574 Hayes St., San Francisco, CA 94117

Contributor Notes:

Dylan Williams is a damn geat guy and very snazzy dresser. The second issue of his insane comic The Crime Clinic (published by Slave Labor) is due out next month. Look for the latest instalment of his Horse series soon from Aeon. Also, please be sure to order the first issue of Jambalaya, which features the first two parts of his epic Hank Williams Sr. biography, plus new comics by Gabby Gamboa (see below). Copies are $2.00 from P.O. Box 9849, Berkeley, CA 94709.

David Lasky is the creator of Boom Boom comics, now published by Aeon. Expect the third issue later this year. John Porcellino's Spit and a Half (see address at end of the interview) also carries several of his minis, including the new self-published anthology OM. David is yet another cartoonist who lives in Seattle.

Garret Izumi is a really nice guy. I'm always running into him at conventions, but never have time to talk to him. He gave me this three page story to print at APE. He's made a few comics, and won the Xeric grant (at least I'm pretty sure he did). He's kind of a mystery to me, so I don't really know what to write here. Last time I saw him was in San Diego where he had just bought a rare Krazy Kat book for the big bucks.

I also don't know who **Christian Osborne** is, except that he worked on the strip with Garret Izumi. I assume he wrote, or co-wrote it. This is what you get when you wait to the last hour before deadline to write the contributor notes. Boy, I'm lame.

Jam is a weird guy from Brazil, who wrote me a bunch of letters. Right now he says he's working as a male nurse, which is good because, "it's a lot of fun, not to be equaled, I dress up (blooded) don't longer am hungry." He also is in the bands Brain Fusty, Jerked Meat, The Worm and P.O.G.O. If you'd like to contact him write Jam, RVA: Rolante, 332. Sapucaia Do Sul-R.S. CEP: 93214-530, Brasil

Lisa Maslowe is the creator of the mini-comic The Catbox Room. She is currently hard at work on issue number three. To order the second one send $2.00 to her at P.O. Box 170143, San Francisco, CA 94117. The dishes talk to her...

Brian Marsland lives in Tempe, AZ, where he works at an art production company. For a selection of recent mini-comic Things, send a few dollars to him at 420 W. 12th St., Tempe, AZ 85281

Gabby Gamboa co-edits (with Fawn Gehweiler) the all-girl anthology comic On our Butts, published by Aeon. Her latest work appears in the historical mini-comic Jambalaya, and is very good.

Eric Searleman is the creator of Jazzbo: Comics That Swing (published by Slave Labor). Look for a third issue soon. He's also working on new, as yet untitled, anthology series with Joe Chiappetta and James Kochalka.

The ninth and final issue of **Jeffrey Craig LeVine's** comic book No Hope (published by Slave Labor) came out last month. In October look for The Days Go By Like Broken Records, a collection of No Hope 1-6, plus some mini-comics and never-before published strips. Buy the No Hope t-shirt from Slave Labor while supplies last.

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Printed in Canada

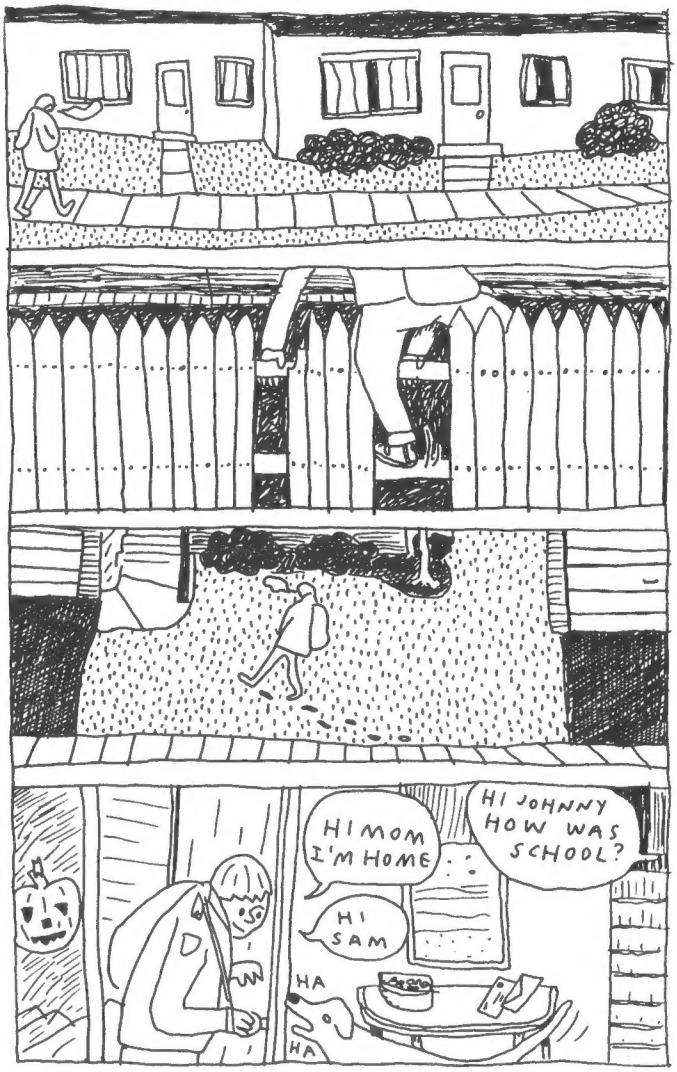
an interview with John Porcellino

I interviewed John Porcellino over the phone in late June or early July of 1995 (I can't quite remember). He is the creator and publisher of one of my very favorite comics, King-Cat, the latest issue of which is number forty-eight.

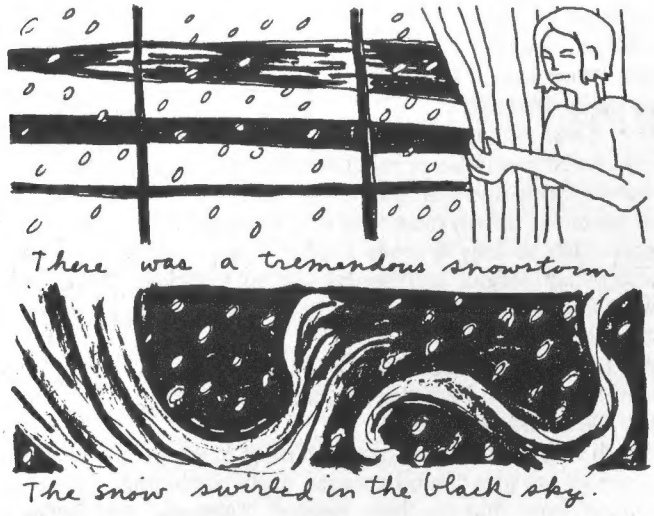
John: I'm a little bit nervous.
Jeff: Hey, so am I.
John: Oh, you are?
Jeff: Yeah. So, how's it going? What's new?
John: I just got back from Wyoming, which was very nice.
Jeff: What were you doing out there?
John: Visiting my old friends who live up there, and getting out of town for a little while. Wyoming is very nice. It's very sparsely populated, which I think is good.
Jeff: I'd like to go there...I've never been there.
John: Have you ever been out west at all, I mean mountain west?
Jeff: Not really...
John: It's pretty neat. Living here has changed my whole way of seeing things.
Jeff: As opposed to living in Chicago, where you grew up?
John: Chicago is pretty tense and a there's lot of people. It's just nice out here. I like it a lot out here.
Jeff: In Denver, right?
John: Yeah. So, that's what I did this weekend.
Jeff: Denver's kind of a big town though, isn't it?
John: Yeah, it's not huge...I think there's half a million people in the city. Coming from a Chicago type thing it's definitely a lot smaller. For me, it's the right combination of things to do and cowboys. I enjoy it.

Jeff: When were you born?
John: I was born on September 18th, 1968, in Chicago, Illinois.
Jeff: What was it like growing up in Chicago?
John: It was wonderful. I have very idealic memories of my childhood in Chicago. I grew on the northwest side and then we moved out to the suburbs when I was ten years old. All my memories of growing up in Chicago are pre-adolescent, so they're pretty happy. Then I lived in the suburbs through high school, and then moved out to Dekalb Illinois, where I went to college. Dekalb is a little town about sixty miles west of Chicago.
Jeff: Did you graduate from college?
John: Sure did...a bachelor of fine arts, in painting.
Jeff: What was that like?
John: It was entertaining, because most of the people who go to art school are just dumb bastards, and I got a great deal of satisfaction from making them squirm. Actually, the whole art thing...if you want to talk about art and comics...definitely one of my biggest motivations was that from the time I was little I considered myself and artist, and when I was in college I struggled a lot with being an artist versus the fact that I don't like most artists, and I don't like the whole art myth.
Jeff: Which is?
John: The art myth of, "here I am, a struggling artist pouring my soul out into a world that doesn't understand me." The problem I have with fine art, is that to me art is about communicating. I am an artist because I have a personal vision, or way of seeing the world that I want to express to other people. If your goal of being an artist is to communicate, than being a studio/gallery artist is about the worst way you can go about doing that...because you end up revolving in this self-absorbed art world that has very little to do with reality. It has more to do with a circle of snobs.

The art I did in college was kind of anti-art, and as it got more and more conceptual, I got to the point where the next logical step was to stop making art altogether, which I did in August of 1990. I quit art cold turkey. I've drawn comics for a long time, and that's when I switched my focus from painting to comics.
Jeff: When did you start drawing comics?
John: I drew comics the whole time when I was little. Another thing is I never really read comic books at all. It was definitely not a part of my growing up experience. I owned maybe six or seven comic books my whole childhood. They were all horror comics, or supernatural. "Ghosts," was one of them, and "Chamber of Darkness," that kind of stuff.
Jeff: Why do you think you drew comics when you were a kid, then?
John: Part of it was I would read the Sunday funny type things, but I never really read "comic-book" type comics. I think it was a combination of the Sunday funny type thing with monster movies. The closest approximation I could make from a movie would be comics, drawing little panels, little scenes and stuff. When I was around five years old the comics that I drew were monster movie



weekly alternative paper, and I used to read those, and that's what made me really start drawing comics. Also in Chicago, there's a school of artists called the Chicago Imagists, which were really influential on me. They were fine artists, but it was very comic booky, and kinda graphic. That was one thing that really struck me as odd when I talked to other people who drew comics, is that I kinda came to comics from the opposite end of a lot of people...which is, I came to the comic book medium through fine arts...learning about the pop artists and stuff. Where as, a lot of other people grew up reading comics, and then at some point tried to expand the medium to a more fine arts focus, and that's not really a goal of mine at all.

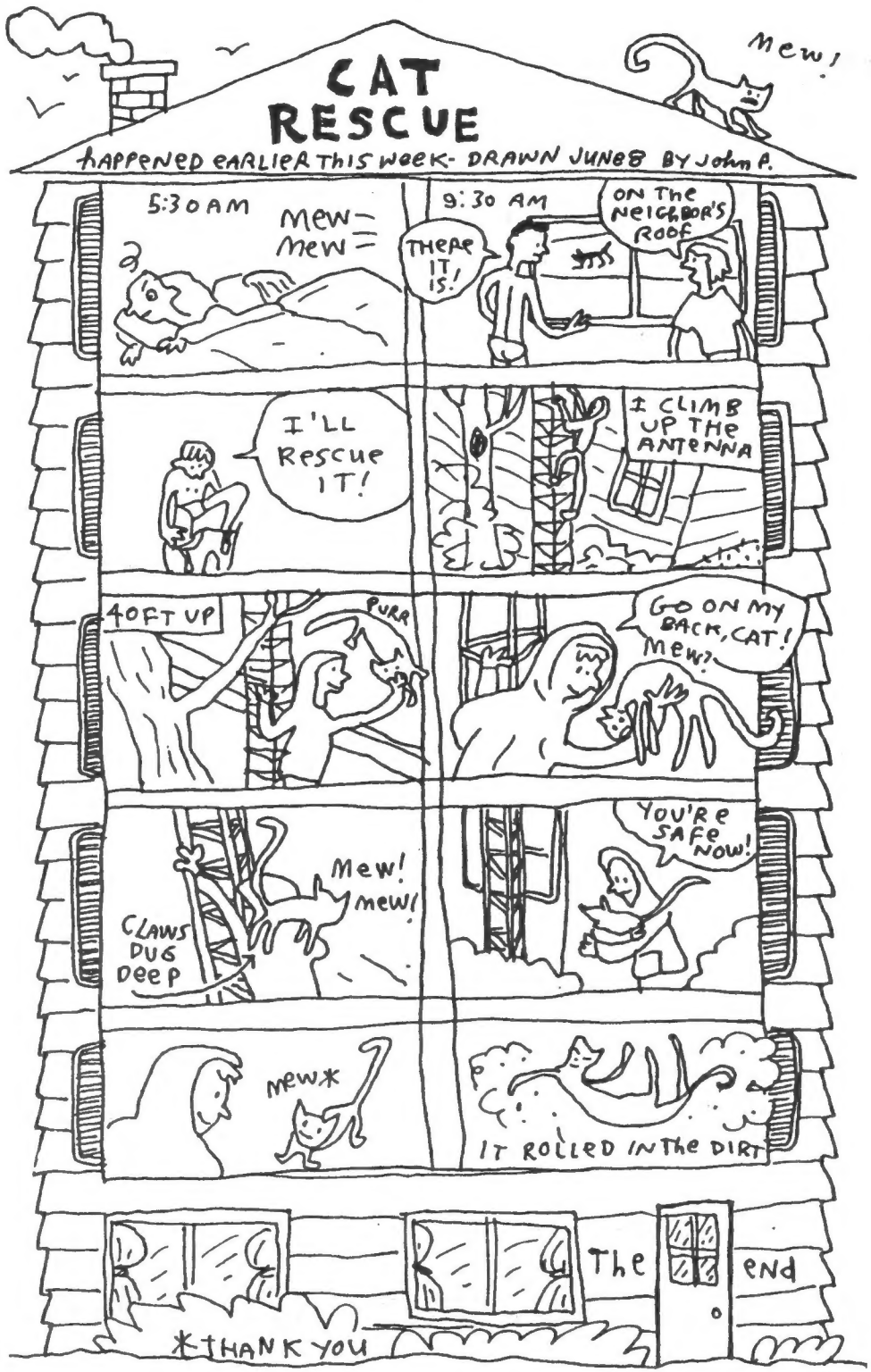


Jeff: When did you start King-Cat? Was that after you decided to quit drawing in art school?
John: No, it was about a year before that. I started King-Cat in May of 1989. I'd done zines for a long time. My first fanzine was in 1983.
Jeff: Were those comics or...
John: Yeah, the first one was a comic. It's really embarrassing, but it was a Dungeons and Dragons kind of thing. But, it was funny. It was all talking funny animals. After that I did a punk rock fanzine called Zo-Zo, and we just kind of passed that around in high school. When I went to college I started a new magazine, which was an art and poetry magazine called Cehsoikoe, and that's when I discovered the whole world of zines. I had a copy of Cehsoikoe for sale at a record store, and this girl, Lanie the Oyster bought it and sent me her zine, Lime Green Bulldozers, and I was astounded that anybody else did a little xeroxed magazine, because I thought I was the only person in the world who did it, and I went to her house and she showed me a Factsheet 5, and that was the spring of '87.
Jeff: That was kind of like a turning point?
John: It definitely was. Look at me now. That changed my whole way of seeing things, in that I realized there was a whole network of people who communicated this way, and ever since then that's what I wanted to do.

Anyhow, so I did Cehsoikoe for a few years, and then started King-Cat in '89.
Jeff: And now you're up to number forty-eight.
John: That one took forever, but yeah, I'm up to forty-eight. So it's been six years now that I've been doing King-Cat.
Jeff: That's pretty impressive.
John: Thanks. It's definitely something that I intend to do for the rest of my life. I don't really foresee anything stopping me, until I become physically debilitated.
Jeff: What do you think about the early issues of King-Cat?
John: I like 'em. The whole idea of King-Cat when I started, was I used to just come home from work on Friday evening, draw all

HOUSE OF BUGS
SOMETIMES MY MIND DISCONNECTS FROM MY HEAD
IT FLOATS UP OFF MY BED
I LIVE IN A HOUSE OF BUGS
SHADOWS MOVE
ALCOHOL
DREAMT OF HER AGAIN LAST NIGHT.
John P. 11/2/03

night, put it together on Saturday afternoon, and then print up copies on Sunday. So, I guess the early issues were considerably sloppier...and more spontaneous. Most of the comics in those early issues are pretty lame, but I think that's pretty typical. But, I'm not embarassed by them. It's kind of neat to look at all the issues, because you can definitely see a transformation going on. At the same time I think the early issues contain the roots of most of the stuff I'm doing now. Maybe they were a little more angry and sarcastic, but kind of the same.
Jeff: It seems like the earlier issues might have offended the average person more...they were a little crazier.
John: Those were definitely crazier times for me. As I mellow out in my old age, I guess I'm just getting wimpier. But, that's fine too. The older issues were just way more spontaneous, in that, something would happen to me, or I would get an idea, and within a few hours I was drawing the comic. Whereas now, basically because my life is much more complex and scheduled out and difficult, I can't be as spontaneous, which I think is kind of a drag. Actually I've recently started to try to bring back some of the spontaneity into what I've been doing. Kind of draw a line between the two, which will hopefully make things better. Yeah, I'm happy with King-Cat. I might not be totally satisfied with every issue or comic I draw, but as a whole, I'm pretty proud of King-Cat.
Jeff: How many copies of the current King-Cats are you distributing?
John: Number forty-seven, I did eight-hundred copies.
Jeff: Is that the most for any issue so far?
John: Yeah, and I'm down to about five left, so I'll probably print


CAT RESCUE
happened earlier this week- drawn June 8 by John P.
Mew!
5:30 AM
Mew=
Mew=
9:30 AM
There it is!
On the neighbor's roof
I'll rescue it!
I climb up the antenna
40ft up
PURR
Go on my back, cat!
Mew?
Mew!
mew!
Claws dug deep
You're safe now!
mew*
It rolled in the dirt
The
end
*thank you

YR dreams are little deaths
written Nov. 19, 1992
drawn Jan. 24, 1993
★ by John Porcellino
MOUSE
Can you listen to music after you die?
Can only hear music you memorized
You create the universe after death
Repeat random experiences
desperation
clinging
pursuit
hear music- but it's the music of YR head
SLIPPING AWAY
(the curse of those who love life so much they want to die.)

more. Joe Chiapetta is putting out this flip book type thing, so there's going to be like a million copies of that, so I'm not going to worry about printing too many more. I remember, the first issues I did, I always did eighteen copies. I can't remember how I came up with that number. I think it was, "Well, I have six friends, I'll give one to my folks, and these two record stores will take five each or something," so that'd make eighteen.

Jeff: How do you distribute your comics?

John: Just through the mail. Also Wow Cool sells them for me, and then I sell them directly to a few stores like Comic Relief in San Francisco, Fallout in Seattle, and Quimby's in Chicago, but mostly it's just through the mail.

Jeff: Do you have subscribers?

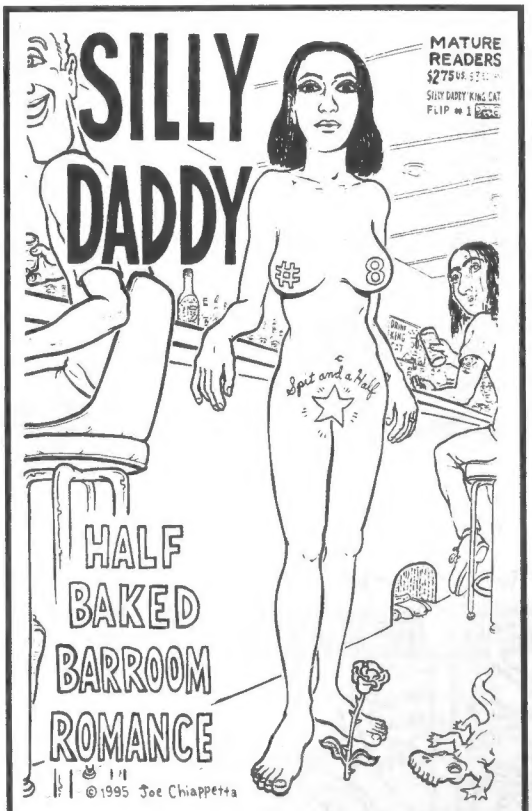
John: Yeah, there's probably about a hundred King-Cat subscribers now, plus maybe another hundred that are just people I write to on a regular basis who get 'em.

Jeff: What's the story with that Silly Daddy/King-Cat flipbook?

John: The story is that Joe wanted to do it, so I said okay.

Jeff: Is that going to be a regular thing?

John: No. Uh, Joe wanted it to be, but I'm not really interested. This could be an interesting topic.



Joe Chiappetta's cover to the first Silly Daddy/King-Cat flip-book

Joe's idea is to get Silly Daddy out into every comic book store in America and kind of force feed it to the leagues of morons, whereas, that's something I'm not really interested in at all. Like we had to do that book comic book size, and Joe's going through all the (I don't really know too much about the business of comic books) distributors and stuff, and doing orders, and soliciting and all that shit. He's just doing that 'cause that's what he wants to do. It's not really an interest of mine in any way.

I mean, I think it's cool. The flip-book is cool, and hopefully maybe it will get King-Cat into the hands of people who may have heard of it, but don't know how to send a dollar in the mail. But I don't know, the whole comic book world is pretty unappealing to me.

Jeff: That's understandable. Um, so you just want to continue to photocopy and...

John: Well, I don't have a photocopy fetish or anything. If it got to the point where it would be cheaper where it would be cheaper...

Jeff: To print two-thousand or whatever...

John: I'm not against that. I'm not against making a lot of them, or making money or whatever. I think of King-Cat more of a fanzine than a "comic-book." You know what I mean, like a comic book you go down to Fantasy World comics and buy.

Over the years it's been interesting to see the whole zine explosion or revolution or whatever they call it. In the old days I just used to trade King-Cat with whoever. I'd trade King-Cat for poetry zines, or punk zines, or other comics or whatever, and now I almost exclusively get mail from people who do their own little mini-comics and stuff. It's kind of become a little too pigeonholed for my taste, but I think that's because there's a lot more people who are interested in comics nowadays.

Jeff: Do you mean it's not as diverse as it used to be?

John: There's still an incredible diversity of zines, and topics, and subjects, and all that stuff, but it seems like the only mail I get is from comic book people. It's been interesting to see the fanzine thing kind of develop along those lines. It's an interesting topic for me. I wrote to that Kyle Rimkus guy, and we had a couple good letters back and forth about it, but I'm very much a staunch defender of the whole concept of a fanzine. I guess I'm kind of a self-publishing iconoclast. That would be a nice juicy way to say it. I'm just not interested in a lot of things other people are interested in, like soliciting my comic in people's distribution catalogs and stuff.

Jeff: Do you think that by not doing that you manage to keep it fun for yourself?

John: Yeah.

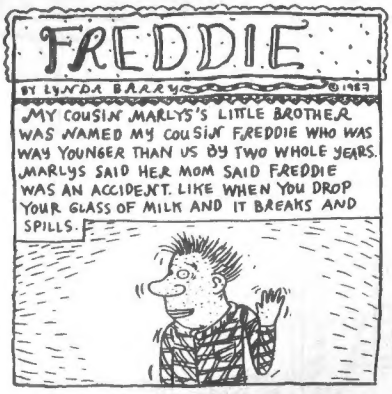
Jeff: Is that the main reason?

John: When I look at the people who are heroes to me, it was people who maintained a sort of individuality, or integrity. See, it gets tough, because it's not like I think if you're getting your comic published by a real comic book publisher that you've somehow sold-out or compromised your integrity, but that personally, it's not something I'm interested in, and I think that it's probably because of my punk rock background.

Jeff: Who would you say some of your heroes have been?

John: A lot of bands. A lot of different writers. Jack Kerouac is one of my heroes, which is always scary to say, because there's such an anti-Kerouac faction out there. Julie Doucet was the prime inspiration for me doing King-Cat. Lynda Barry. There's a lot of fine artists, like Max Beckmann. He was one of my favorites. Matisse. A lot of the German post-modernist that flourished in the eighties. Lots of the Chicago Imagists, who I mentioned earlier, like Jim Nut. Keith

Night by Max Beckmann 1918-19


FREDDIE
BY LYNDA BARRY ©1987
MY COUSIN MARLYS'S LITTLE BROTHER WAS NAMED MY COUSIN FREDDIE WHO WAS WAY YOUNGER THAN US BY TWO WHOLE YEARS. MARLYS SAID HER MOM SAID FREDDIE WAS AN ACCIDENT. LIKE WHEN YOU DROP YOUR GLASS OF MILK AND IT BREAKS AND SPILLS.
The first panel of a four panel Lynda Barry strip from 1987

Haring was an inspiration to me. He had a big of impact on my stuff. Matt Groening. Those kind of people.

Jeff: What about music...you said a lot of bands...

John: The whole eighties punk rock/post-punk thing, that's what inspired me. That definitely changed my like. Like Husker Du...all those great mid-western punk bands. That was my introduction of the whole world of people who had taken creativity and responsibility into their own hands. All the SST bands, The Minutemen and Black Flag. Good old REM. Soul Asylum. There's a million bands like that. You know the whole story..the point of that whole scene was artistic integrity, and a certain amount of, "Fuck you," to people who didn't understand or fought against that. I definitely have a streak of that in me. For good, or for bad...it's in there.

Jeff: And now you have your own band, right?

John: yeah.

Jeff: This isn't your first band, right?

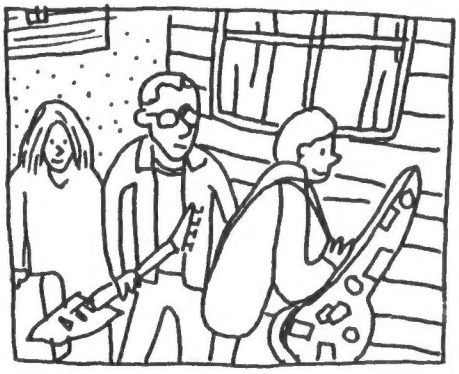
John: No, I've been playing in bands since I was like fourteen.

Jeff: What instrument do you play?

John: I play the guitar, and I sing. Sort of sing, but yeah, I've played in bands forever.

Jeff: Is it bad to talk about your band in this interview? Do you want to keep that separate from comics?

John: You know, I used to, but I don't really care anymore...mainly because the stuff I'm doing musically now, it's on the same terms of the stuff I do with King-Cat, which is that I'm totally in control of it, and I'm not embarrassed of it or anything. For whatever reason, in the past I always wanted to keep them separate. In fact, I always used to use a stage name. Like if people made me sign my name in band related things, 'cause I didn't want people to connect the two, but I don't care anymore. So if you did want to talk about that we could.



Jeff: Yeah, tell me a little bit about your band.

John: It's me and three of my friends. It's called the Felt Pilots. We've got a couple of records out. We should have a full length thing done this summer, if my ears don't give out. I don't know, what do you want to know about it?

Jeff: How would you describe your music?

John: I would describe it as slow, simple, sad music. Kind of along a Velvet Underground or Neil Young inspired course.

Jeff: Didn't you just go on tour recently?

John: Yeah, we toured in March. We did the mid-west, which was a lot of fun.

Jeff: Was that your first tour?

John: It's the first Felt Pilots tour. I've toured before with other bands.

Jeff: What were the names of some of the other bands you were in?

John: Well, the band that did the touring was called Smile, and that was around '90-'91, '92 almost. About two years in that period. That was back in Dekalb.

Jeff: Do the Felt Pilots want to tour more?

John: It would be nice, it would be fun, but it's kind of hard to do when everybody has jobs and stuff. Definitely one of the big points about the Felt Pilots is, I try to make sure it doesn't become a real band. The idea is more to just get together because we're friends and we want to make this music, than it is to go out and sell records or tour for the sake of touring. We toured in March because all of a sudden we were all going to be free for that period, and it was really fun. We just wanted to drive around and play our music in different towns, more than like, "We've got this record coming out and we need to go promote it." So we would want to tour more if it was emotionally feasible.

Jeff: Do you have a job right now?

John: Yeah, I'm a mosquito abatement man.

Jeff: Again?

John: It's my chosen career.

Jeff: Obviously that's something you can only do at certain times of the year, like during summer...

John: Yeah, that's one of the nice things about it. The season basically lasts from about April to September, so I have my winters off, and it really is the best job I've ever had. Once you get over the whole guilt/karma kind of thing, of being single-handedly responsible for slaughtering an entire species...it's a pretty good job.

Jeff: So do you feel you're over the guilt of that?

John: I battle with it still, but I could never give up this job because it's just too perfect.

Jeff: How long have you been doing mosquito abatement?

John: This is my fourth season. I did it for two years back in Chicago, and this is my second year out in Colorado.

Jeff: I think it sounds pretty useful. I mean, I hate mosquitos.

John: You know, the truth is I hate mosquitos too, but I was raised catholic, so I have a very guilt conscious world belief. I don't really like mosquitos either, but part of me says, even though you don't like them doesn't mean you should slaughter them indescriminately. But, to each his own. That's my chosen career.

Jeff: What made you decide to draw the way you do, in such a simple, yet beautiful, style?

John: Part of it is definitely a conscious thing. I think a lot of people kinda think that I just couldn't draw any other way, but it definitely is a chosen way of drawing. This goes back to the whole fine arts versus...I guess this would be more of a populist art. Definitely one of my goals is to make my expression, which at this point is King-Cat, as easy to digest to the average Joe as possible. When I was a painter, I was basically dealing with the same ideas that I deal with in my comics, except that I was using a very different medium to express myself in, and the people that I would like to communicate to are not the kind of people who go to art galleries, or read art magazines, or give a shit in any way shape or form about an artist and the whole gallery system. My goal is to have somebody who isn't interested in creative expression or ideas along those lines be able to pick up King-Cat and read it, and laugh, and say, "That happened to me once," or somehow relate to what I'm trying to express. One of the ways that I definitely try to do that is to make it as simple, straight-forward and as easy to understand as possible. That's probably where a lot of the drawing technique comes in.

Jeff: Do like any other comics that are coming out right now? Do you look at other comics?

John: Um, I used to, because Jason Heller used to work at Mile High comics out here, so I traded in all my comic books for credit, and anything he thought that I would enjoy, he would pull 'em aside and give them to me, but he doesn't work there anymore, so my connection to the world of comics is kind of cut off, but I probably read all the really obvious things. Like I think that Eightball is really great. I think that Hate is mediocre. I think that the new Dirty Plotte is probably the best one that she's put out in a long time. But, I don't really see too many "comic book" comic books on a regular basis.

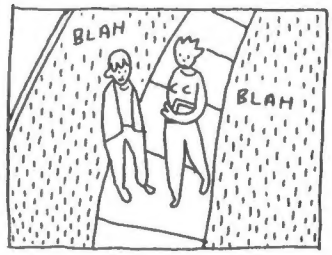
L-R: Jerome, Jenke, Sue, John P., Joe Chips
(that's Specimen Mtn. Behind us...)

Jeff: Tell me about King-Cat #45, the one that was done with a lot of your friends and stuff? I thought it was really neat...

John: That one came out pretty good. I was totally pleased with that one.

Jeff: In the comic it said it took a really long time to get it all together. Is that just because so many different people were involved?

John: That's because I was really lazy, and I got a new girlfriend and stuff, and I stopped doing everything except hanging out with her. But really, Joe Chiapetta's comic was done four days after he got back to Chicago from that trip, and it just took me a really long time to do mine. Going back to that magazine Cehsoikoe, which was an art an poetry anthology magazine, and one of the inspirations for doing King-Cat, was that as Cehsoikoe became more complicated it began to take longer and longer, till I was putting out maybe two issues a year, and the were just big ordeals. It was when I got Julie Doucet's Dirty Plotte minicomics, that was the direct inspiration for doing King-Cat because it struck me that she was single handedly responsible for every mark in this book, which somehow, through my experiences of doing fanzines and stuff, they'd always either been anthologies where I was



editing a bunch of people together, or they were group efforts where a bunch of my friends got together and put out a zine or something. Because I was so frustrated doing Cehsoikoe, because it had become kind of a monster, and something that took six months of planning to put one out, that was kind of the inspiration for doing King-Cat. It was something that I was single handedly responsible for. I think it's kind of neat to have other people do stuff. Periodically there will be something from someone else in a King-Cat, but for the most part, I guess it's my show, because that was the inspiration for doing it. That I could do them in a weekend if I wanted to. Obviously it takes me longer to do them now, but that was part of the motivation for it. Actually, Flying Saucer Attack has kind of inspired me to want to do an anthology, which I kicked around in my head for a couple of years, but then I think back to my struggles doing stuff like that, it's difficult to arrange and motivate a bunch of people.

Jeff: In some of the old issues you talked about that...

John: Monsters Exist...(laughs)...

Jeff: Yeah...that never came out, right?

John: No it didn't, although I have an envelope full of stuff from people that they drew three or four years ago.

Jeff: So it still might come out someday?

John: I thought about doing it last summer, just to get it done, but at this point I think it would almost be insulting to the people who sent stuff to bother even putting it out, because it's been so long. That goes back to the whole anthology thing, which is, it's hard to control the quality and keep people from having hard feelings when you do want to control the quality. That was part of the problem with Monsters Exits. The response wasn't big enough from artists, it wasn't bad, but maybe thirty or forty percent of the stuff was stuff that I wouldn't have wanted to print, so it never happened. Jerome has definitely inspired me. Jerome did a good job of motivating people to do Flying Saucer Attack, so maybe I should just have him edit Monsters Exist. But yeah, that never happened, and I don't know if it ever will. It's kind of a nice little myth now, the whole Monsters Exist thing. Maybe in like twenty-five years, when people are doing zine archive things, people will brag about having one of these Monsters Exist that never actually came out. That'll be pretty amusing.

Jeff: Tell me about Spit and a Half.

John: Spit and a Half...I started that as my record label in high school, and I put out around nineteen tapes on it, and then I kind of stopped doing it for a year or two. Then when I moved to Denver I started it up again. I started a record label, and also the zine catalog type thing. The motivation for that was, at the time Factsheet 5 was dead, which was, it's dumb to say, but it really was the zine bible. That was the way people contacted each other, and that was the way people stayed in touch, found out what was going on and got involved with stuff. When that died, I think it shocked a lot of people who did zines, who were very

reliant on Factsheet 5, and so, what a lot of people did, and I did too, was started doing plugs in our magazines, so people could find out about new stuff that was going on in different places. But the plugs never really did very well, like sometimes they would, but people need a big kick in the ass sometimes to bother putting something in the mail to someone else. So it occurred to me that there was so much great stuff going on on, fanzine wise, that if you collected it all in one place and made them available to people that it would be easier for people to bother actually writing and getting these things and that was why I started it, and it's done real well so far.

Jeff: So is the main point of Spit and a Half to help distribute a bunch of things that you like?

John: Yeah, that's definitely it. Just to kind of help out. The whole concept of the zine world, it's definitely what I'm comfortable doing, and it's what has inspired and shaped me over the past ten years, and I take it very seriously. I think it's probably one of the most important things that has happened in a long time, and the most satisfying, and I love it. So, the Spit and a Half catalog is my little effort to help it thrive, which it seems to be doing pretty well on it's own nowadays, but at the time I started the catalog I think it was a void that I wanted to fill.

Jeff: It's a good catalog. There's a lot of good stuff in there.

John: Thanks.

Jeff: Do a lot of people order stuff through it.

John: Yeah. I don't know what to compare it to, because I don't really know how other people like Wow Cool operate and stuff, but it definitely does a lot better than I ever anticipated it would. I thought it would be something where I would sit around on a Friday night and put together a few orders, but it's almost become a full-time job now...in terms of work load, not in terms of paying my rent and living in a mansion. I'm pretty proud of Spit and a Half too, because I think it has helped and I think it's good. I struggled with it at first, but I'm pretty happy with the way things worked out, although it's getting to the point where it's taking away from the time that I used to be able to spend being creative, which is kind of a drag, but I think I just need to get somebody to help me do it, and that will alleviate that problem. That was the Spit and a Half thing. I thought it would be a good way to help people, and also it's not like I'm doing it for purely humanitarian reasons. The income that I get from Spit and a Half goes right back into printing King-Cat or putting out seven inches, postage or stuff like that, so it does help me financially to get the stuff that I'm working on out, which was the point too. I would like for it to be my full time job, and you never know...it may become that.

Jeff: Your comics are autobiographical, right?

John: Pretty much at this point they are. Even the stuff that isn't strictly autobiographical is definitely based on personal experience. It's either strictly true stories, or it's kind of a true story that's been twisted around a little, but the twisting is usually kept to a minimum. So yeah, it is almost all autobiographical.

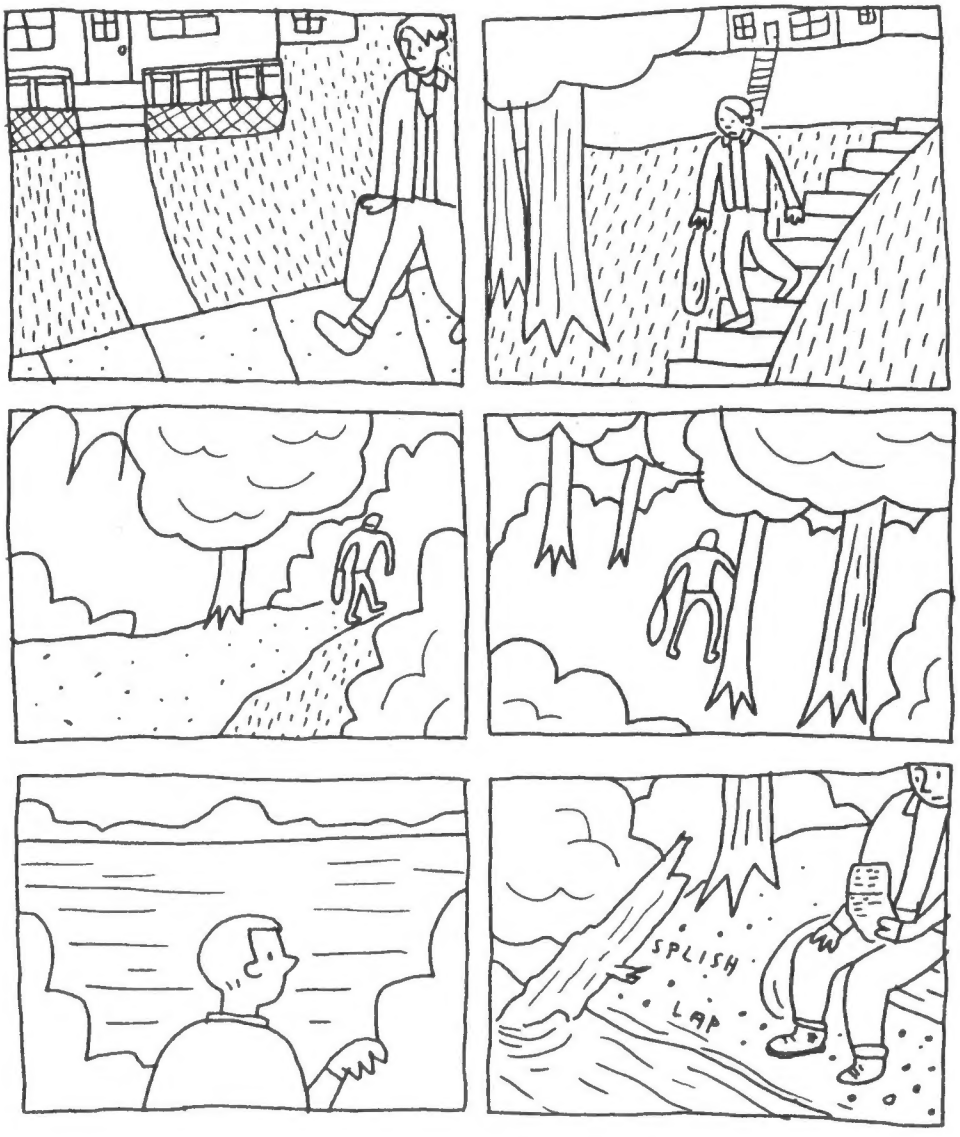
Jeff: One thing I think is neat about your comics, and different, is that most other people who do autobiographical comics tend to focus on the negative aspects of their lives to either get laughs or shock people, but you don't really seem to do that. You tend to focus on the things you like or found interesting...the good experiences from your life.

John: Well...probably. Terrible as it sounds, I actually do enjoy life, although it's very difficult most of the time. At this point I find the difficulties and the problems, I mean they're challenging, and they're interesting. I definitely am interested in life. I don't know how to make that sound not highfalutin. It's definitely an interest on a more basic level of just going out and seeing people and seeing what they do, figuring why they do it and how they do things.

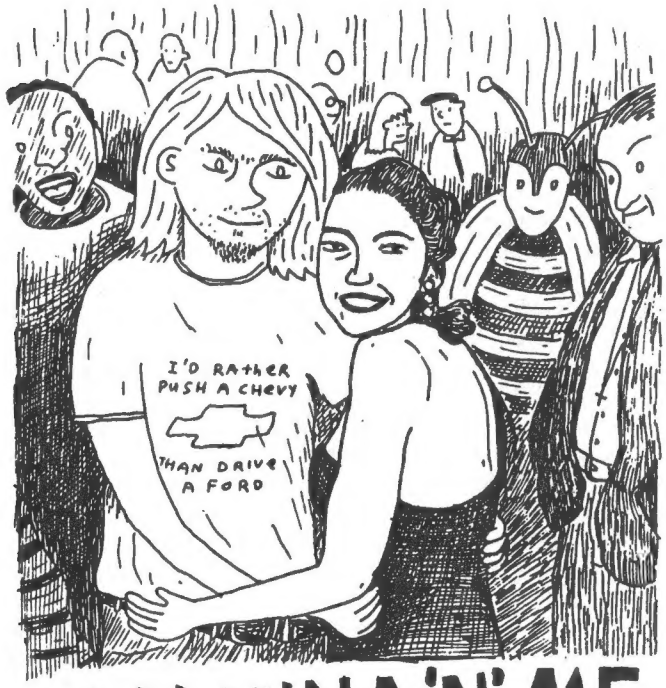
Jeff: It really comes out in your comics, and that's probably the best quality about 'em.

John: Thanks. I do find a lot of enjoyment in just walking to the post office. I don't know how to make it sound not cheesy. I mean, I'm definitely not a real happy person, but I've kind of come to terms with that in finding satisfaction and kind of a reason to keep going in the tiny little things that happen each day. Maybe that comes across, and maybe that's why I do it. Also, one thing is, I'm totally interested in history and documentation, which I think is a part of why I do what I do, is that when I die I want there to be some sort of a documentation that I existed, even if it's in terms of things that might seem irrelevant or inconsequential. I don't know. I do kind of look at King-Cat as my autobiography. It's kind of like a journal. So, that's kind of neat. I even look back at old issues and it brings back all the feeling and experiences I was having at that time and it's a good way to remember things.

Jeff: How can people order your comic?



KING·CAT
COMICS AND STORIES
HUMOUR ET REVOLUTION NUMBER 32 50¢



MADONNA 'N' ME

DAYDREAMS BY JOHN PORCELLINO

John: They can send me a dollar and I'll send them whatever the latest issue is, if they want a catalog, I ask that they send me a stamp...and stamps never hurt. That's another thing, it drives me crazy when people don't send stamps for stuff, because as you know, it's hard to do this stuff.

Jeff: With the postage going up it's like...

John: You won't know how it gnawed at me to raise the cover price of King-Cat, because for the first four years it was fifty cents...it was actually thirty-five cents for the first couple years, and then I sweated all night when I raised it to fifty. I do it as cheaply as I can. I'll scam copies, and when I have to pay for them I go to the cheapest possible place where I can get them done at, where the quality is still good. If somebody sends me a dollar for a King-Cat, I think I make twelve cents, when all is said and done, when you include postage and print and envelopes and all that junk.

Jeff: It's amazing that there's even twelve cents left.

John: That's usually when I can scam my way through a bunch of copies or get them really cheap. It's a dollar now, which I think is okay, cause it's a nice round number, but I'm going to start having more pages for a dollar. It drives me crazy...I don't want to get into the whole angry zine thing, but even if a zine was really great I wouldn't spend more than two dollars on it. That was the best thing about Quimby's in Chicago. You used to be able to go in there with a ten dollar bill and come home with forty zines, 'cause everything was like twenty-five cents, and the most expensive thing was a dollar, and I'd sit and worry about it. Nowadays people will put out little twelve page xerox things and charge a buck fifty or two bucks for it and it's just crazy. The zine fad thing is going to end, and I'm willing to wait it out.

Jeff: What's your plans for the future, especially regarding King-Cat? You said before that you wanted to conceivably do it for the rest of your life.

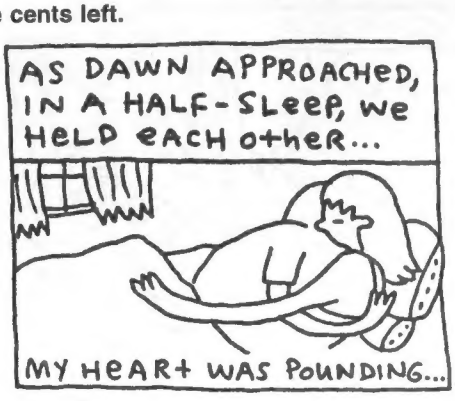
John: Yeah...definitely. This is my one true love.

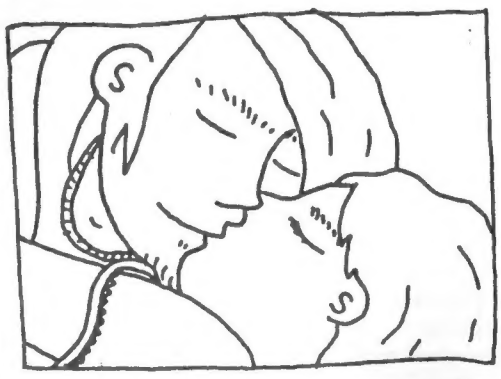
Jeff: I was wondering if you'd let us in on...if you have any ideas about maybe the next issue, or the next couple of issues, or if you'd rather not talk about that kind of stuff?

John: No, I don't mind. I actually made a list this morning of the stuff that's going to be in the next issue. Next issue people are going to hate, because I think it's going to be a lot of writing. I'm going an article about Gram Parsons, a review of Come Dance With Me by Frank Sinatra, a story about my grandmother's dog, about the time I went to vacation bible school, and article about the classics of bedroom rock, like Paul McCartney's first solo album and stuff, and then the other story I'm going to do is about a trip I took to Appleton, Wisconsin in 1985, which is going to lead into King-Cat fifty. I want to do something pretty special with it, and it looks like it's going to be, basically everything that happened to me in the summer of 1986. Which was the year I graduated from high school in the spring and went off to college in the fall. That summer was a pretty amazing time in my life. Doing number forty-seven, which was the longest story [I've ever done], I think it was twenty pages, or eighteen pages or something, kind of inspired me to want to do something where I could get a little bit more in depth and actually kind of develop something more along the lines of...I don't know how to say it...just make it a lot longer. I plan on doing at least fifty pages for number fifty, and even more if that's what it takes. Everything in the world happened to me that summer, like everything that could possible happen to a seventeen year old guy did. That was a pretty powerful time in my life, so I'm excited to do it. I also think it's a kind of a period that a lot of people go through, so it might be something a lot of people could relate to.

Jeff: I think the issue you were talking about, number forty-seven really stays with you. The fact that it was just one story in the issue, it sits in your head more than if there were five or something stories.

John: There's a few things that I'm totally satisfied with, and forty-seven was one of them. Forty-seven came out just the way I wanted it to. It said all the things I wanted to and it said them the way I wanted to say them, so that was kind of cool. And the fact that it felt so good to me to do something like that is kind of what inspired me to want to do this. I mean, I guess I could fall flat on my face here, but I think that the stuff I want to do in number fifty is strong enough on it's own as just powerful events and experiences. I'm looking forward to getting forty-nine done so I can start working on number fifty. I don't know how long that's going to take me, but sometime soon.





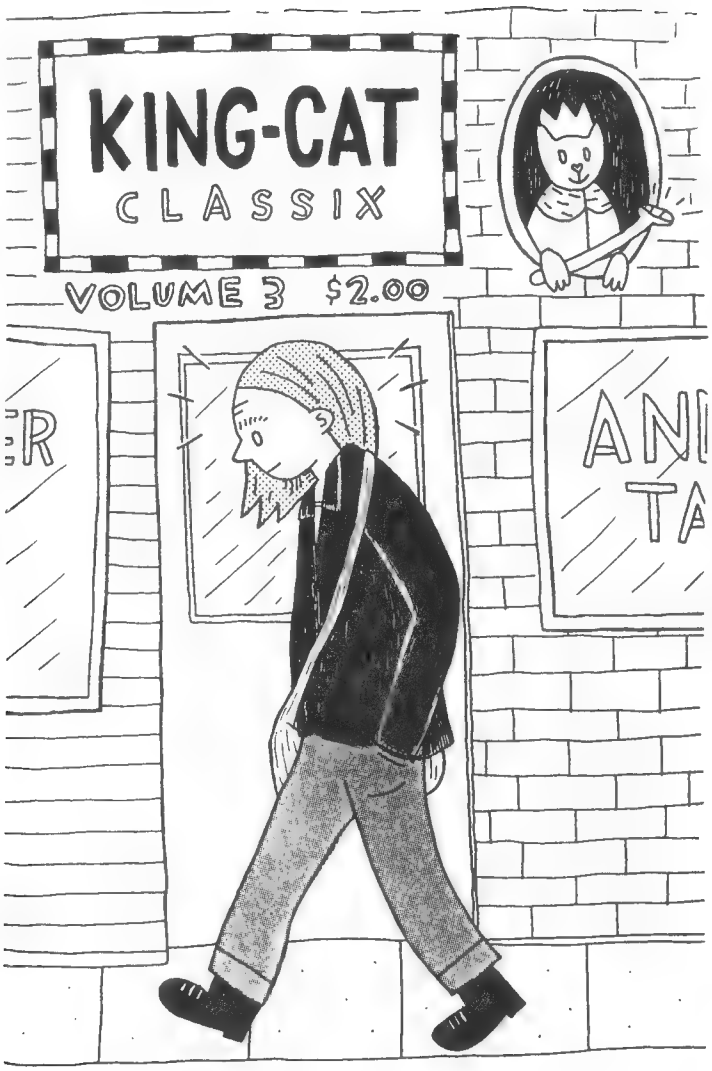
LEAVES

October 27, 1992

the WIND WAS STRONG and steady that DAY, POURING the LEAVES over me LIKE RAIN
RUSTLING them DOWN the AVENUE...
PILING them UP IN SIDEWALK CRACKS.
the AIR WAS FILLED with the SCENT OF Autumn...
BAKING APPLES
and SWEET BROWN LIFE

NEVADA

AROUND SUNSET we PULLED IN to RYE PATCH, NEVADA FOR GAS and SLOTS. we're TALKIN'...
GAS
BEER
MIDDLE-OF-NOWHERE...
I TOOK A LEAK and LOOKED AT the SLOTS
FORGET IT!! I RAN OUTTA LUCK IN RENO!
777
JOHN LYONS WAS ON the PHONE, TALKING to AMY...
...SO NOW WE'RE FOUR HOURS OFF SCHEDULE
So I TOOK A WALK AROUND the STORE
"TRUCKER'S GUIDE to HAZARDOUS MATERIALS"
HMM...
I WAS BY the DOOR LOOKING THROUGH C&W TAPES. A FAT LADY WAS MOPPING.
LA TI DA
SUDDENLY- A MINI-VAN with DELAWARE PLATES SQUEALED UP and a GIRL RAN IN and SHOUTED:
EXCUSE me! BUT WHAT TOWN IS THIS!?!
the FAT LADY ANSWERED:
HONEY- THIS IS RYE PATCH NEVADA!
THANKS
SLAM
AND the GIRL TOOK OFF JUST AS FAST AS she CAME
there WAS A PAUSE and the FAT LADY TURNED to me, LAUGHING:
AND THIS IS the MALL!!
DRAWN AUG. 2, 1993
J.P.



the Best of Issues No. 21-30♡

Jeff: Do you think it will be out by the end of the year, maybe?

John: Oh yeah, definitely. My job will be over in September, and usually when that happens the floodgates open, because it's like," Wow, I can't believe I have fifteen hours to work [on comics] non-stop today," as opposed to going to work all day. Actually, I'd like to have it out by the end of summer, because August is the Spit and a Half tenth anniversary, so that would be a nice coincidence, but that might be pushing it.

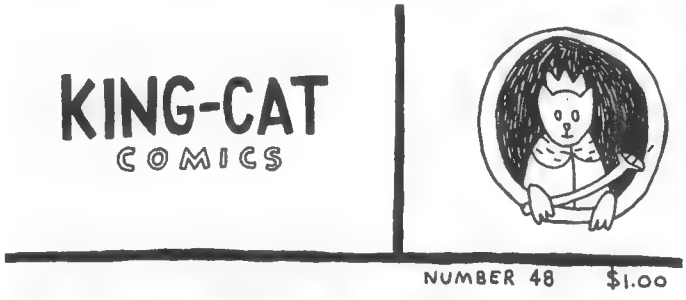
One thing that I did want to start doing was working on my art a little bit more. The whole point of the way I draw and stuff is that, "Well, I just drew it this way, and I did it in five minutes, and that's how it came out and that's the way it stands." It would be nice to have the time to be able to sit down and get more into the artwork, in terms of shading and doing more interesting things. Which I'm going to try to start doing.

Jeff: I like the simple art too..

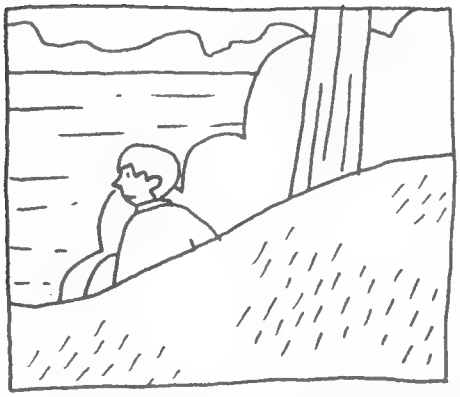
John: Not like I was going to start drawing like Norman Rockwell, but...for a more personal reason of just getting a little bit more satisfaction out of being able to sit down and work on a drawing for an hour, as opposed to three minutes. Like the cover to forty-eight, all I did was drew it the way I draw, and then sat down and did a bunch of lines to make it black, but that was very satisfying to me. Just to sit there for like forty-five minutes with my pen, hunched over my drawing. It was fun to do. It made me happy when I was done, and I need to do more stuff like that.

Jeff: Do you draw normally at the size it's reproduced?

John: Yeah. Actually forty-seven was the first issue that I went out and bought laser paper to draw it on, cause it's real nice to draw on that. But the first forty-five issues were drawn on, this is one of my prouder things, these pads that my dad has, that at the top the say "From the desk of Charles E. Porcellino," and there's a little pen and an ink bottle or something. He had a bunch of these little pads of paper, and they're just 8 1/2" X 11" cut in half, so I would draw on the back of those. The first forty-five issues are on that paper, which on certain of the copies you can see "From the Desk of Charles Porcellino." It bleeds through the paper. But I sold-out and went to laser paper, and it's a lot better. I have a lot of problems drawing, 'cause the stuff I have to draw with is so shitty. Like the pens are always clogging and doing all this crappy stuff, and when I use laser paper it works a lot better. But yeah, I just take a piece of paper, cut it in half, and draw it. Although I do see the advantages of drawing bigger and then shrinking it down, it just seems like too much of a pain in the butt for me. I would have to switch everything though, because all my drawings are is whatever the line that comes out of the pen. So if I draw bigger and use the same pen, it's not the same thing, because it's proportionally not as dark, or not as thick or whatever. So I'd have to do something else. When I look back at the old King-Cats the thing that strikes me is the spontaneity. That's been one of the things I've been trying to do...combine the spontaneity of the early issue with the skills that I've developed



and stories by JOHN PORCELLINO



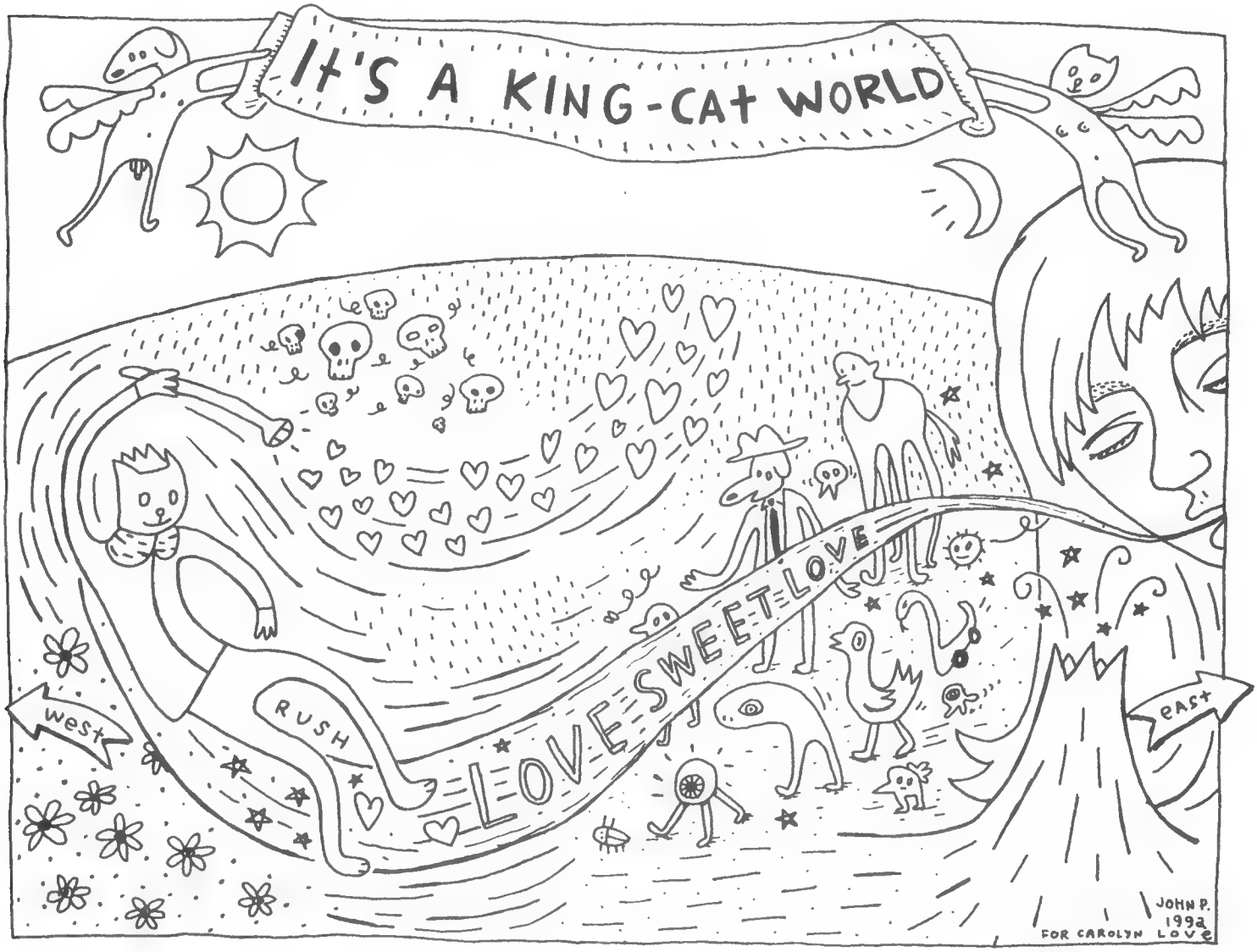
in terms of writing and being able to draw what's in my head.

I don't know if it comes across that way, but some of these one page comics I draw, I laboriously work on the words. To the point where, by the time it's done, it's like an essay to me. It's like something I'm going to get graded on, and it kind of loses it for me. I don't know if that comes across...maybe in some cases it does. I just work and try to get better. I mean, I'm satisfied with what I'm doing and the way I'm doing it, but I guess it's just human nature to constantly try to be better. Either that or just my American Catholic upbringing.

But beyond issue number fifty I have no idea. In the past before I became so busy that I couldn't just sit down and draw, that was always the thing that held up a new issue, that nothing interesting happened to me. But I've been drawing more and more on the past, so I have twenty-six years of that to exploit. I'm just excited about number fifty. I might try to scam color copies for the cover too, if I can possibly do it, but, no guarantees.

To order the latest issue of King-Cat Comics send US$1.00 to John P. at Spit and a Half...P.O. Box 18510, Denver, CO 80218. Send a stamp to the same address to get his great catalog, which includes many back issues of King-Cat as well as other really neat stuff.

Unless otherwise noted, all the illustrations in this interview are from King-Cat Comics by John Porcellino.



Chat with Malazo

by L. Malazo

JAR OF FOOLS by Jason Lutes

'Night, Ernie.
'Night, Al.
Good night, Claire
So? What do you think?
I can't decide whether you're a better teacher'n me or she's a better student'n you
She's good, all right. I just don't see how that's gonna help.
I mean, you an' I both know it ain't a magician's world anymore
Unless you're David fucking Copperfield, making the Eiffel Tower disappear on T.V....
WHA-
Real subtle, that guy.
He was all over the T.V back at the home. People couldn't get enough of him.

It seems that in the comics world, it isn't easy to find works of fiction which are well thought out and developed. With autobiography (good autobiography - I mean like Peep Show and Slutburger), this deficiency is not as apparent, probably because the writer is documenting something that actually happened. The beginning, middle, end, and plot twists have all been acted out already upon initiation of the comic. But find me a good intricately developed plot in underground/alternative comics. There aren't too many. ("Why I Hate Saturn" by Kyle Baker does admittedly come to mind.) Many comic books have regular and recurring characters around whom stories can be based for lots and lots of issues. The stories don't go anywhere, and in fact, they aren't meant to. With other comics that have ongoing stories, the stories may be compelling, but rarely is it obvious that the writer has really planned what is going to happen in future issues. Instead, the writer is just as surprised as his or her readers by what eventually unfolds.

When I read Jar of Fools parts one and two, I became aware of that missing plot factor in so many comics, because Jar of Fools has what those other comics don't. It reads like a good novel, but it has the bonus additive of competent, attractive art.

Jar of Fools really revolves around five main characters. There is a young, forlorn magician named Ernie who can't get much work and consequently has been hitting the bottle. He's also bummed because he's in love with Esther, who dumped him, but isn't quite ready to sever all ties either. Then there's Ernie's old mentor/teacher of magic, who escapes from a rest home and hides at Ernie's place. Ernie comes into contact with Nathan the con-artist, who is trying to support his young daughter, Claire. Nathan accidentally saves Ernie's butt, and as payment, engages Ernie to teach Claire magic. Meanwhile, we see Esther at her shitty cafe job, dealing with very realistic customers from hell. She's also avoiding her most recent beau, basically because she can't get her mind off Ernie. Needless to say, unexpected turns of events throw the lot of them together (minus the unwanted beau), and if I say anymore I'll spoil the story for you.

There is an underlying melancholic tone throughout the books, as well as an expression of disdain for modern "conveniences" like TV and computerized everythings. Of course those things make life more difficult for those old-school guys trying to earn an honest living as magicians and con-artists. A definite strength in this book is that the characters have emotions, and in the midst of drama and adventure, there is meaningful conversation and contemplation.

And then there's the art. I found the covers of the books to be particularly beautiful, and they're on that fancy Black Eye Press paper. The art in the comic is a cool combination of cartoony faces and more realistic background/urban scenery. Lutes' cartooning improves as the comic progresses. The drawing of people's faces gets much better around the end of the first book, and on through the second. Overall, the art is damn good. Lutes captures life and humanity within the panels to an impressive degree.

Jar of Fools, as evident by my gushing, made quite an impact on me. A well told story, with strong accompanying art and honest feeling, this book is proof of the deep potential which exists in the medium of comics.

GIRLHERO by Megan Kelso

Picture it! A rivetter and a welder in love. We'll usher in a new era of harmony between the warring unions; We'll be HEROES, we'll—
I SAID leave me alone.

I recently read Girlhero for the first time and I'm sure glad I did, because it rocks my world. Megan's style of drawing is unique and appealing, and her stories are equally engaging. The ongoing story, entitled "Bottlecap," is a science-fiction flavored adventure, complete with suspense, intrigue, oppression and revolution. The jobs held by the "Girlheroes" are reminiscent of Industrial Revolution factory jobs (and are equally harmful), while the bosses are similar to the worst corporate fascists of today. The story mostly revolves around the girlheroes' attempts to evade the law after one of them shoots a boss during a revolt at work. This is complicated by the 1984-esque capabilities and tactics of the bosses/government. Also, the girlhero who shot the guy ends up falling in love with the wife of one of the head-goons. The two women get caught in an embrace at the end of issue three, and issue four deals with the repercussions. Well, it's more complicated than that, but you get the idea. Honestly, I can't wait for the next one to see what's gonna happen.

The fourth issue, which is the newest one, is also the best. The

cover is so cool, I got a poster of it for my room. Half the issue is the Bottlecap segment and the other half is a story which documents the progression of events when a girl sets her sights on a married man.

Girlhero is a self published comic book, which is impressive, because it looks really good. Megan also has stories in Action Girl (an anthology magazine published by Slave Labor) and On Our Butts (see review below). Check 'em out.

ON OUR BUTTS

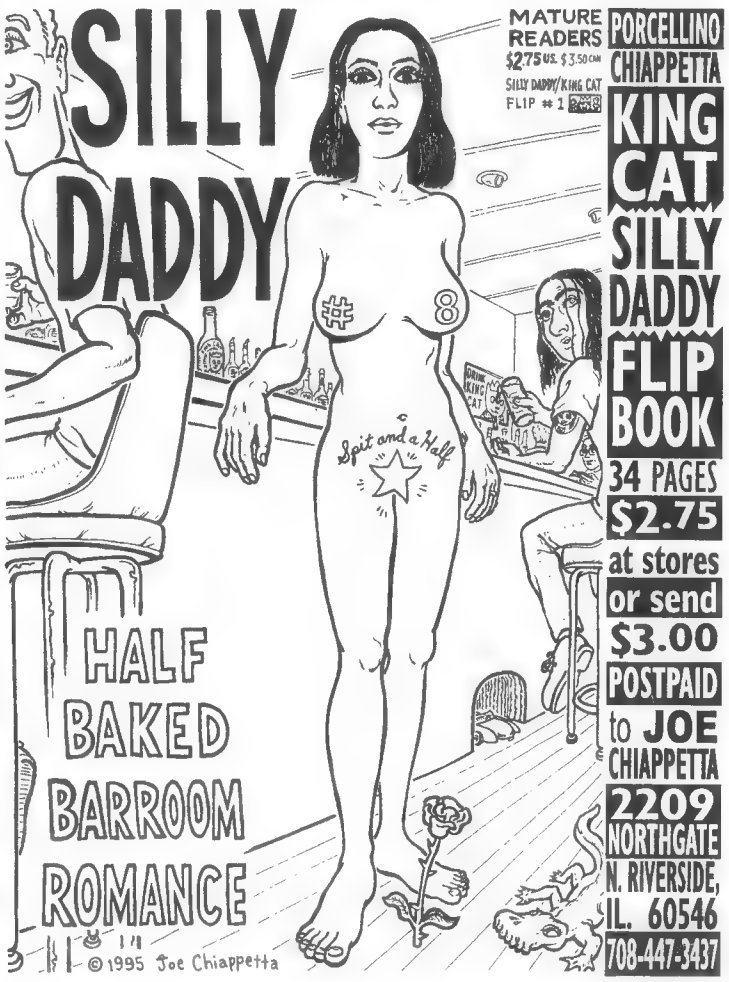
On Our Butts is a new anthology of female cartoonists, edited by Gabrielle Gamboa and Fawn Gehweiler. Although it may seem that women's comic anthologies are getting to be a dime a dozen, there appears to be no shortage of worthwhile content and contributors. The cool thing about this anthology is that the cartoonists are younger and mostly not as established as the ones you may have seen in anthologies like Twisted Sisters. It's nice to see their work in a slicker format than the xeroxed pages of a mini-comic.

Several of the comics are particularly noteworthy. The back cover, done by Jessica Abel (who does the mini-comic Art Babe), is an intense comic. It's basically a fantasy of beating the shit out of one of those guys who can't let a girl pass by on the street without making a comment or proposition. The style is unique, and although the text is hard to decipher, it's sure worth the extra minute or two to figure it out. Ariel Bordeaux (of the mini-comic Deep Girl) tackles the question often asked to her, "Why do you put yourself down so much?" Her answer is honest and informative. She makes some points which are really on target, about how parents' attitudes can significantly affect self-esteem, and how years of telling yourself how lame you are make it hard to stop feeling that way.

Gabby Gamboa's comic rendering of Johnny Cash's song, "Frankie's Man Johnny," originally appeared in a 2" X 2" mini-comic. The larger size of On Our Butts does the drawings much more justice. Gabby's drawing style is cool and unique, and the images she created go well with the lyrics. Fawn Gehweiler's Motorcycle Boy is sort of a modern-day version of a girl waiting for her Prince Charming. Fawn's art is amazing too.

Other artists in the book include Chantale Doyle, M.C. Betz, Megan Kelso, Lisa Onomoto, Janelle Hessig, Anna Costa, J. McClaughlin and Fly. I look forward to more issues of On Our Butts, or at least more work by all the artists involved.

- advertisement -



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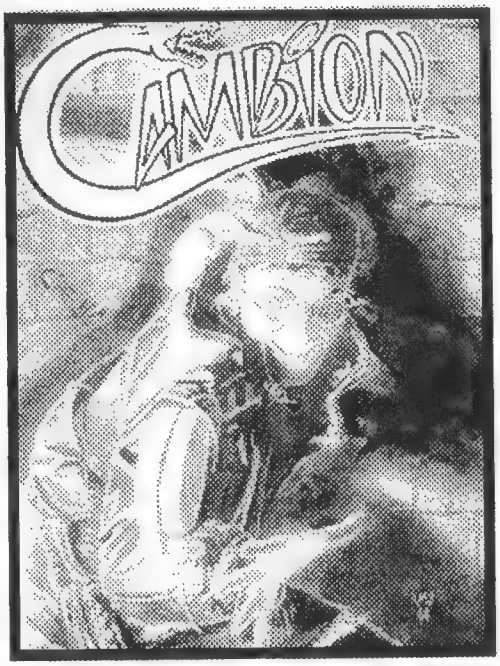
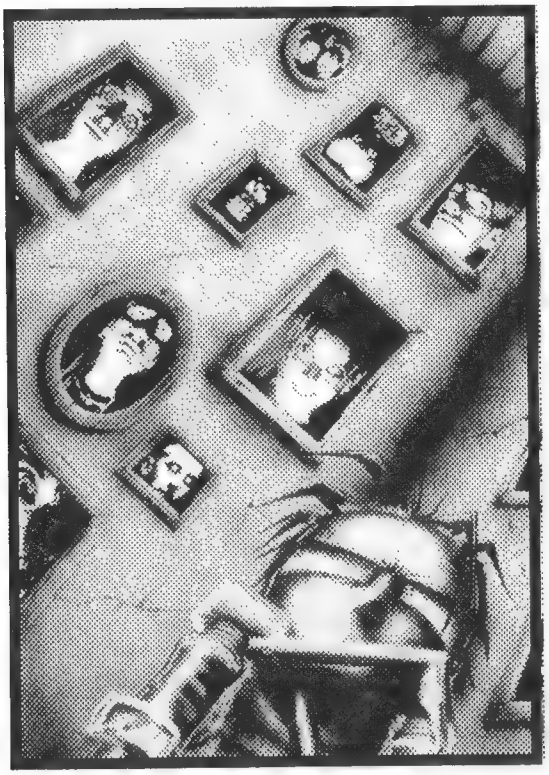


CAMBION #1

A manic depressive bass player is running loose around the streets of Chicago and he's looking to violently break up any bad relationships he comes across. With his faithful sidekick Gemini, the bunny with an attitude, and his trusty yo-yo, Cambion tightropes the fine line between reality and insanity. His dual personality gives him a unique double vision while limiting his communication to breaking out in song lyrics. For mature readers.

Written by Joe Gentile, Illustrated by Phil Rittenhouse, Cover by Ken Meyer, Jr., 24 pages, Black & white with color cover - $2.95



JOHNNY THE HOMICIDAL MANIAC #2

"Human Relations" — further enhancing the decline of human existence. In this issue we delve further into the diseased mind of Johnny C. Some things are so nightmarishly dismal, you can't help but laugh maniacally as you drool down your chin completely drenching your blood soaked shirt! Then you find that you just KEEP laughing, even after the point at which you can find no humor in the situation. It makes no difference because you STILL can't stop!! And, it gets louder!! Your vocal chords rupture, your choked laughter causes blood and throat debris to gurgle up. Your ravaged mind simply begs to snap, but something denies you this respite, so the nightmare continues and you REALIZE THAT THIS IS YOUR LIFE!!!

Johnny is a very nice book by Jhonen Vasquez. Issue #2 includes another suicide attempt, some unpleasant encounters with people and some rather extreme reactions. Also more Happy Noodle Boy, Wobbly Headed Bob and a terrifying installment of MEANWHILE. Pretty pictures, ugly world and a cast of adorable, invisible, fuzzy bunnies.

Written & illustrated by Jhonen Vasquez, 24 pages, Black & white with color cover - $2.95

ORDER NOW! 1-800-866-8929

An interview with Bill Blackbeard

at the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art on Sunday, April 1st by Dylan Williams. Blackbeard is, perhaps, one of the greatest living resources for comics and the man behind the Smithsonian Book of Newspaper comics. His new book "The Comic Strip Century," a history of the first 100 years of the comic strip, will be out later this year.

Dylan: Okay, the first question is: what projects have you been involved with? That's a big question but it's the thing I'm most interested in.

Bill Blackbeard: Well now, are you talking about the present or..

D: ...over the years.

B: If you call projects books, well over 200. Because if you go on a strict count basis you would have to count every volume in the complete Terry and the Pirates or every volume in the complete Wash Tubbs and Captain Easy, complete Tarzan, complete Krazy Kat. These are all series of books that the Academy provided material for which I've done introductions for and provided data and research for. Then there's any number of individual books like Secret Agent X-9, the Kin-der Kids, the current Little Nemo; there was another series of comic book publications like Polly and Her Pals, the Shadow, Buck Rogers...

D: The ones by Malibu.

B: It gets to be quite sizable and of course in terms of major, or what you might call substantial, individual series of work as opposed to series of reprints, I've done the Smithsonian collection of newspaper comics, Sherlock Holmes in America and I am currently working on a book that will be about twice the size of the Smithsonian book, called the Comic Strip Century. That's going to be two volumes, boxed, about 450 pages, color throughout. It will be another selection of major comic strips from the 1890s to the present. Then I'm also doing the Complete Yellow Kid. Both of these last projects will be out in 1995, The Comic Strip Century in mid 1995 and the Complete Yellow Kid in October of 1995.

D: They're both from Kitchen Sink?

B: The Comic Strip Century is being published separately but it's being distributed by Kitchen Sink.

D: Who's publishing it?

B: David Li, a New Jersey publisher, originally known as Remco. His house title was used for the Little Nemo, Polly and Her Pals, and Krazy Kat color reprint books of a few years ago. Remco was a name cobbled together from the initials of Richard E. Marschall, the editor involved. A lot of money somehow vanished along the way, and David Li severed all professional connections with Marschall as a result, turning to me for the continuation of the Nemo series and the other titles. Li's distributor, Kitchen Sink, will go on getting the books into stores.

D: Wow. That's great news; I had heard they were discontinued.

B: Well, the Pollys were a real problem because they didn't sell well — lacked the titular mystique of Krazy and Nemo, apparently—but the other two will definitely go on. Kitchen Sink is also continuing the black-and-white Krazy Kat Sunday-page reprint series, which were dropped when Eclipse folded

D: Are they going to reprint the Eclipse ones?

B: There are no plans for that at present, unfortunately.

D: Some of those are really hard to find.

B: A lot of them were sold in bulk to remainder shops on the East coast.

D: Yeah that's how I got some of them. The color ones were in remainder shops too.

B: The Remco editor also made off with the bulk of the color books and remaindered them in New York under his own authority, without any of the money going to the publisher.

D: Is there one book you're particularly proud of?

B: I like them all. Well, of course I prefer certain strips to others. As far as the books, I try to do the best I can with each. After all, each comic strip character has it's own particular enthusiasts. They want to get the best treatment of it that they can.

D: The color in the Terry and the Pirates Sunday book are great.

B: There's another story behind that. Originally NBM was more or less content with the earlier black and white Terry and the Pirates series which contained both the Sundays and dailies. When Remco came out with it's Terry and the Pirates book which had color Sundays. Terry Nantier at NBM felt that he could go them one better, do better color work and so forth. He started his series and luckily, for the collector,. when the Remco series went under, his continued, so now at least it's all in print.

D: Those colors are just gorgeous.

B: Yeah, they really are.

D: So, when and where were you born?

B: To make an unimportant story very short...in Indiana, in a town called Lawrence.

D: My relatives are from Bloomington.

B: Really? Well Lawrence is right outside of Indianapolis. It used to be a small town, now it's just become a designated suburb, been absorbed into greater Indianapolis. I was born there in April 28, 1926.

D: Did you grow up there?

B: ... not for very long, came out to California when I was about seven, I think. Newport Beach California.

D: How did you first get into comics?

B: Like anybody else, I read them in the Sunday and daily papers.

D: Which ones were you reading?

B: That's an interesting question because, typically, it didn't take a kid who liked comics very long to find out that the best ones

were in the Hearst newspapers. Respectable middle class parents in those days didn't buy the Hearst newspapers, they bought the other papers, whichever they were, was in whatever town. Of course these papers did not have Mickey Mouse, Popeye, Krazy Kat, Barney Google, Bringing Up Father... all of the strips that kids particularly wanted to read. Not that there weren't plenty of good strips from other syndicates, but King Features had a monopoly on the big names. Like other kids, I had to visit neighbors that did subscribe to Hearst papers get those comics. You could never get unbroken runs, of course. You couldn't get them all together until much much later.

E.C. Segar was drawing two dalies (The Five-Fifteen and Thimble Theatre) until he began the Thimble Theatre Sundays

D: Would you ever clip the stories out and put them all together?

B: There was no point. I would with some of the strips that were in the papers that my parents subscribed to, which in California was the Los Angeles Times.

D: What was the Hearst paper in your area?

B: The Los Angeles Examiner, but Hearst had two papers in Los Angeles: the Morning Examiner and the Evening Herald Express.

D: What kind of schooling did you have?

B: Newport Beach High School...GI bill...went to Fullerton College...that's about it.

D: Did you graduate?

B: No.

D: What was your intended major?

B: Well...that's the whole point; I hate to get into this because it sounds. smug but it didn't take me long to discover that I knew more on any subject that interested me than the teachers did. So, I was bored out of my skull and wasn't going to waste any time on things like math or scientific theory. What I wanted to do was pursue particular lines of interest in literature and history and nothing else. Of course you can't do that in the American school system. You can in the English and Continental systems to some extent. I just lost all interest in school and left as soon as I had used up my GI bill. The bill was nice though, because I was able to put in time at Fullerton and more or less pursue my own interests. I didn't care what kind of grades I got, I was chiefly interested in being funded to spend my time reading and researching, which is what I did during that period. As soon as the bill gave out I just dropped out of that and went into freelance writing.

D: You wrote for the pulps?

B: Yeah, I had a story in Weird Tales among other things.

D: Which issue of WT?

B: It was a story called Hammer of Cain.

Weird Tales is still published. There is an outfit that brings out about 4 issues a year, focusing on the current crop of horror and weird writers and doing a pretty good job. Amazing Stories is still being published. That was the first science fiction magazine, first published in 1926.

D: The covers aren't nearly as good as they used to be.

B: Oh no..

D: I forget the artist's name who did all those gorgeous covers?

B: Frank R. Paul? A guy with two first names.

D: What kind of things were you researching in college?

B: I was completely fascinated with the whole structure of English and American literature and the historical background of this. So, what I wanted to do was read straight through Dickens, Thackeray, Kipling,Poe... all of the major writers. School didn't give me time for that so I just said to heck with school, it was pointless. What I was doing from the time I was 14 is what the whole humanities educational structure was supposed to prepare the students to do when they grow up. The was no point in going on; I was already an accomplished scholar; schooling was irrelevant.

D: I felt the same way in regards to art. School is good in that it gives you access to a lot of different things, but if you're already motivated enough to look at the stuff on your own then you don't really need the classroom structuring. There are people who do need it, of course.

B: That's the point of schooling and it always has been here, the reason it was willingly publicly funded here until recent years was to prepare so many competent individuals for the work force. In other words, that you have people well enough educated to go to work in offices, run their businesses, to take care of the books, make change and that sort of thing. It had very little to do with the nominal cultural goals of creating a well educated, well rounded individual.

D: How did you go about getting into Weird Tales? Did you just submit to them?

B: I had a friend who was already writing for Weird Tales, his name was Jim Causey and he wrote a number of Gold Medal novels. He said that they were very friendly at that time to new

writers since so many of the regular writers were in the armed forces or otherwise involved with the war effort. Several established writers at that time went to work for the armament industries because they were paying so incredibly well, the pay was better than writing. They just weren't turning out the same amount of material.

D: Were you in World War Two?

B: Oh yes, I was in the 89th cavalry reconnaissance squad in the 9th army, and I was in France, Belgium and Germany during 1945 when the war was wrapping up. Then with the occupation troops there for a while and then back to the states.

D: How long were you in the military?

B: The usual duration, what they used to call "duration plus six." As soon as the war was out I was mustered out within a year.

D: With all those writers, did you know any of the paperback writers?

B: Well, actually yes, but that's only because I was a science fiction fan for many years and quite active in fandom, publishing fanzines and so forth. In that area the writers were so close to the fans that you quickly got to know large numbers of them, from Fritz Leiber to Phillip K. Dick and John D. MacDonald. I knew all those guys.

D: Did you know David Goodis or any of those Gold Medal guys.

B: No I didn't know David Goodis, he was East Coast pretty much. Jim Thompson, he was in Hollywood and I was out of that loop. Outside of the science fiction and to a certain extent the formal crime fiction field, the writers did not associate that much in a group or a genre.

D: What about Alfred Bester?

B: Everyone called him Alf but I didn't really know him.

D: How did you get into collecting? Have you always done it?

B: Collecting, in a sense, goes with reading and research. After a while you discover that libraries either don't have what you want or have the wrong edition or you have to return the books...it's pointless. So you quickly accumulate your own library. As a matter of fact I think that so many American writers and scholars and even ordinary readers have done this that it's one of the reasons that there is so little support for the public library system. People that have children of course support it heavily because it enables the kids to find sources for their school work. The general public buys paperback books and usually throws them away or keeps them, I don't think they bother much with the old library system.

D: What do you think of that...is it a bad thing?

B: I have no opinion at all, I just think that that's the way it is. It's always seemed to me that if you go from one city to another in the United States you'll find almost exactly the same books in every library, the same writers. In other words, if you have any interest you quickly read through the basic writers and want to find the people that you haven't read that are interesting and the libraries usually don't have these. A lot of people don't realize that the libraries regularly go through their non-fiction and fiction books and just simply throw out any books that have not been circulated in a number of years. At one time the libraries had every major science fiction, mystery, western, sea story, popular fiction writer and every literary writer on their shelves but as the years went by they dumped them regularly so they just got down to the handful that were designated as classics by self-established literary critics. They've got all of Kipling but nothing by Captain Marryat.

D: Yeah, I've never read anything by him.

B: Well, there you are. They have all the Dickens and nothing by R.W.M. Reynolds, and so it goes.

D: That controls what people think of as classics and read as classics...

B: And what they think are important.

D: You think that those writers are as important?

B: I think that the quality is there, but I think that they should be surrounded by the other writers from which they emerged, the same writing field from which they came, otherwise their status, their contents, their quality, can hardly be judged in terms of what it meant at the time it was written. A good example is that many of these writers make reference in their text to concepts, ideas,

The Wrong Clew
I'VE TOLD THESE POLICEMEN TIME AND AGAIN THAT MOONSHINE HAS NOT BEEN IN THIS HOUSE SINCE HIS ESCAPE AND I DON'T SEE WHY THEY KEEP HANGING AROUND- MAYBE I CAN CATCH A EARFULL OF WHAT THEYRE SAYING.
PSST- LOOK BARNEY!
COME ON, KIDDO- WE SEE YOU!
I'LL SMACK YOUR SASSY FACE!
Willard

Moon Mullins by Frank Willard re-formatted to fit in an early reprint book.

SMOKEY STOVER
BY BILL HOLMAN
CLAMOR BOY
JIMINY CHRISTMAS!- ONLY A WEEK AND A HALF TILL MR. CLAUS DOES HIS STUFF - IT'S THE SAME OLD PROBLEM - WHAT'LL I GET THE CHIEF?
GLUE
PIPE LION
THAT'S A SMART MOVE, CHIEF - YOU CAN'T GO WRONG BUYING A HOUSE!
YOU OUGHTA SEE IT, FORREST - IT'S GOT 8 BIG ROOMS - RED SHUTTERS AND A SWELL PORCH!
GOING GOING GONE
FORREST PHIRE
SO THE CHIEF BOUGHT A HOUSE - THERE'S GOBS OF GIFTS I CAN BUY THE OLD HOME OWNER NOW!
FOO
SNUBB'S DEPT. STORE
FLOWER POTS
DOOR CHIMES
WELCOME MAT
MAIL BOX
BIRD BATH
AND IRONS
$18.00
$13.50
WELL, TRIM MY SHOE TREES!- WHAT'S ALL THAT STUFF, SMOKE!
CHRISTMAS CHEER FOO THE CHIEF - I HEARD HIM TELL YOU ABOUT HIS NEW HOUSE SO I BOUGHT SOME SWELL STUFF TO DRESS IT UP!
BIRD BATH
MAIL BOX
DOOR CHIMES
AND IRONS
Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.
Copyright, 1946, by News Syndicate Co.
BUT, SMOKEY - YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT!
WHY NOT?- THE OLD FIRE PLUG AND I ARE PALS - I WANNA SURPRISE THE LITTLE SQUIRT ON XMAS!
GIFT TILL IT HURTS
CHEEP BIRD BATH
FOOT STOOL
BOYOBOY - YOU'RE SURE GONNA SURPRISE HIM - THE CHIEF WAS ONLY TELLING ME ABOUT A CARDBOARD DOLL HOUSE HE BOUGHT FOR HIS LITTLE NIECE!
HAW HAW HE HE
HAHA
JINGLE FOO JINGLE JINGLE
ULP! - AND I ALREADY PAID FOR THE PORCH FOONITURE!
NORTH POLE
Foomous People
TODAY'S CURRENT ATTRACTION IS IPSWITCH K. KILOWATT
VOLT FOO ME!
THE ELECTRICAL WIZARD WHO GENERATES ALL THE GREASED LIGHTNING PEOPLE ARE FASTER THAN.

Bill Holman's manic Smokey Stover from 1946

quotations from other books that have vanished from the library shelves and the reader doesn't know what they are talking about and what their reference is.

D: When you started collecting stuff would you lend your things out to your friends? Would you say "Here's a book you have to read." Like you were a library?

B: Sort of. It would depend on how close the friends lived. As a high school kid, in my teens, most of the kids I knew were in the neighborhood so there was no risk in loaning anything, we saw each other at school or around the community. In the science fiction field, which was very close knit in Los Angeles, loaning was not any problem. Subsequently, of course, no, not so much because books don't come back. Since I've established a research center I will occasionally let obviously responsible scholars take things out.

D: When did this (sweeping my arm around to indicate the room in which we are sitting where I am surrounded by everything from an original Krazy Kat strip to a complete library of Gold Medal paperbacks to an immense collection of comic related toys and of course stacks of original strips clipped from their papers and stacked in order...about 1/8 of the Academy) collection start?

B: Well that's an interesting story. It all came out of the obvious need for a good sound history of the comic strip. I wanted to write that in the late 1960's, and I quickly discovered that there was no research center for comics of any kind. There were no runs of American comic strips at the Library of Congress, at the New York Public Library, at the Smithsonian, at Universities. Nothing at all in terms of individual structured sets of material...like all the Moon Mullins, all the Dick Tracy, all the Mickey Mouse, all the Popeye. These things were there but only in the sense that they were bound into the files of newspapers which the libraries then had. The problem with that is that there never was any index to the comic strips in newspapers, no one ever prepared such an index. Many papers would arbitrarily drop comics from one time to another. You might start reading a particular strip in a particular newspaper in a particular city, and you would discover that the paper dropped the comic strip and it wasn't repeated in any other paper in that city, so that you would have to go to another city to find another bound file to continue reading that particular strip, meanwhile having to give up reading all the other strips that were running in the original paper. You can see what kind of hopeless complications you got into here. The syndicates kept none of their old comics. Every 10 years they would clear out their temporary storage space and just send it off to the city dump.

D: The originals too?

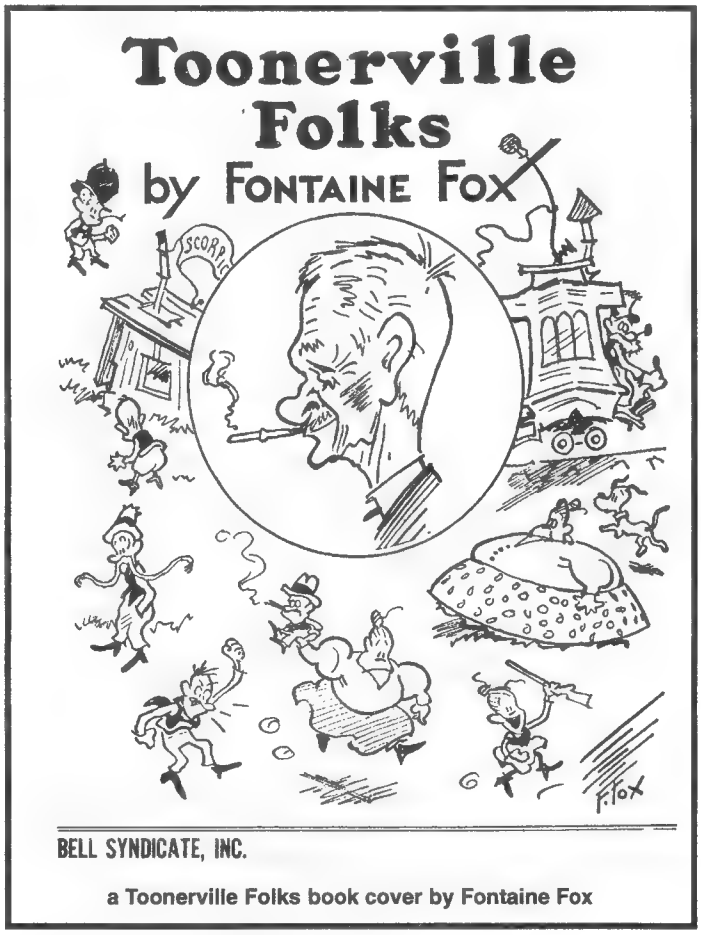
B: Original comic strips were in many cases considered worthless until the 1950's. You hear horror stories of people who would drop in on King features and for one reason or another the editors would take them back to the room where they had various documents and records stored and there'd also be great stacks of original comics. These would fall off the shelves, fall on the floor and clerks and people would walk on them as they went through, kicking them out of the way... Alex Raymond strips along with Harold Fosters and all sorts of things.

D: Why do you think the artists weren't interested in keeping this stuff?

B: Because it was just like manuscripts for fiction magazines. The original comic strips were units by means of which the artists transferred the work to publication. The publication was the end point of the work. The original was just a piece of paper it was not regarded by anybody, including the cartoonist, in the 20's, 30's, and 40's, as art.

D: It was in the 50's that it changed?

B: In the late 50's a market began to develop for it. There had always been enthusiastic young cartoonists and readers that would write in to a cartoonist and sometimes the creators would send them back an original, signed. Those were just regarded as trophies or souvenirs. Other cartoonists would put the work up on the wall near their drawing table. They'd just have one of each as example. They might say " To my good buddy Fontaine Fox." or " To my writing friend Billy DeBeck."...things like that.



a Toonerville Folks book cover by Fontaine Fox

D: You've seen originals like that?

B: Oh yeah, they still turn up. Lots of them were just thrown out when the cartoonist died. His wife would take them off the walls and just throw it away. Original comic art had no known commercial value. Money didn't take part in it, they were given away to people who were enthusiastic or just thrown away. That's why so much of that stuff is lost.

In any event, the syndicates didn't keep originals, they didn't keep proofs, they didn't keep working copies, they didn't keep tear sheets, they didn't keep anything because the idea because the idea before the 50's was that there was no value in an outdated comic strip. "Who would want it? It'd been printed. It's dead."

So I wanted to do a book on the History of comics and I found that there was no way to research it. I was more or less at my wits end because there was no material at the syndicates, the artists were scattered all over the country and they also were very careless about their own files. The older cartoonists who had moved would just dump their earlier things. Only a few cartoonists, like Milton Caniff, Chester Gould, Harold Grey, Roy Crane and George Herriman were sufficiently concerned with the work as a body of work, in the same way that a major novelist would be concerned, so that they would keep everything. They saw the worth and the developmental structure, the value of the developing structure of their work as of continuous importance. They not only had need to refer back to their earlier work in developing their current stories, but they also had a sense of the total value

Krazy Kat Herriman Loves His Kittens By T. E. Powers
Copyright, 1922, by Star Company.
WHY YOU POOR — WELL YOU POOR-LITTLE KITTEN.
"HOW GEORGE STARTED DRAWING CATS!"
ME YOW
CAB-GO TO THE CAT HOSPITAL
CAT HOSPITAL
$3
SORRY WE'RE ALL FILLED
ME YOW
MEE MEE!
HAVE A LITTLE MALTED MILK DARLING.
HA!
IM HIS OFFICIAL PEN WIPER NOW!

a tribute to George Herriman from 1922

of what they had done. Harold Grey kept 90% of his originals and that all went to Boston University. Chester Gould kept most of his original art, proofs and such, and I think that's all in the hands of the Gould family, as are Herriman's. Milton Caniff's stuff all went to the University of Ohio. He kept virtually everything in terms of proofs and in terms of originals. The point is that this was very uncommon. I had nowhere to go to do any research. Then in the late 60's, the American libraries began to get budgeting to buy microfilm replacement for the newspaper files. They had come up with this notion that newsprint was internally self-destructive. That it was decaying at a certain fixed rate every year and before long you would open a newspaper volume and it would all be dust. This, of course, was paranoid fantasy. It had no basis in reality at all. Although the reasoning behind the replacement was specious, the real reason was that the librarians wanted to get rid of all those heavy 20 and 30 pound newspaper volumes that had accumulated over the centuries, just clear them completely out of the building. So, they actually engaged in what was quite frankly bureaucratic fraud. They would be photographed in the newspapers holding a crumbling volume of newsprint. Saying "Here's what's happening. We've got to get rid of it!" So the civic authorities that held the library purse strings were persuaded to untie them and allow the library thirty or forty thousand dollars for complete microfilm runs of newspapers to replace the bound files they had already spent thousands of dollars on in putting away and storage. So the whole thing was for the benefit of library bureaucrats, it had no other purpose. They were relieved of this enormous annoyance, from their point of view. They could fall back on these little boxes of micro film. This way they could also get rid of the people they most disliked in libraries, which were the people that came in and sat in the newspaper room for hours and worked crossword puzzles in old newspapers and fell asleep on the volumes, who just bothered the heck out of them. The whole point is that none of this had anything to do with preserving the past or maintaining physical access to the documented history. A librarian scam is what it was. At any rate, it worked! I learned that libraries were then in the process of dumping this stuff as they got the microfilm in hand and the San Francisco Public Library was the first one that I heard about on the coast that was going to move all of it's newspaper volumes out. They had a large number of volumes from other sources they had stored and they were also going to dump those. Well I discovered that the library in San Francisco, as is true of many other libraries, was bound by it's charter agreement with the city not to give anything away to the public. The library could not give any of it's books or papers to any private citizen and they could not sell them, only transfer them to another institution or destroy them. So, I became another institution. I became a non-profit organization: the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art, complete with board of directors and so forth. From an I, I became a We. We, the Academy, was then enabled, to the great joy of the San Francisco Public Library who didn't have to spend money to haul this stuff to the dump, to come in with some strong guys with strong backs to move all these volumes out to a sorting center that I set up. I had arranged to remove comics en masse from newspapers, in order to preserve them in sequential order, Sunday comics, daily comics and so forth. Now, because the comics were spread over many newspapers, there wasn't really a set of papers in San Francisco that even began to give access to the full record of comic strip publication. So, when the Library of Congress began to do the same thing I turned to them. At one time they had six acres of bound newspapers from the entire nation, in Alexandria Virginia. They have now despoiled and destroyed every bit of that, totally wiped it out of existence and replaced it with this greasy, scummy, scratchy microfilm, of course, which is the only record they've preserved. No color in microfilm, all the color in the papers was wiped out. The same bureaucratic logic: let's get rid of all this dead weight which only a few scholars use and screw them. I picked up a lot of those papers from the Library of Congress, from the New York Public

Library, from the Chicago Public Library and brought those across the country in Ryder rental trucks to my sorting center.

D: What was the date on that?

B: That would have been in late 60s, early 70s, and pretty much through the 1970s; in fact it's still going on to some extent. There are still some libraries that are disposing of material. The state library in California supplied us with an enormous amount of material. One time I had this phone call from the state library and the staff announced that the state had told them that they had to put in a fire safety corridor. The library is in the state's court building in Sacramento and they had to put a fire corridor through the lower level of the courts building, which is where most of the state libraries newspaper files were kept. So they had to get rid of all of their out of state newspaper files at once, "Can you clear out all these tons of newspapers in two or three days?" they asked and I said I could do it. I got up there and picked up papers like the New York World (which was a crucial newspaper), Chicago Tribune, dozens of them.

D: Was the World a Hearst paper?

B: No, it was an opposition paper. That was the paper that Hearst went to New York to compete with. In any event, that had all of the early Yellow Kids. It was one of the last print files in existence of the Yellow Kid. I was doing all that and when I was part way through that, it occurred to me that not only were the comics crucial items to be saved from this holocaust, the newspapers themselves had to be preserved in many cases, because once they were gone, they'd be gone forever. The layouts of the more sensational papers were of extreme graphic and historical interest. The New York Times reads just about as well on microfilm as it does in the bound file so there's not a lot of point in doing anything there...just a concentration of data, facts and words. The sensational papers, though, had a little artistic fit every day, in terms of splashing sensational headlines.

The great William Randolph Hearst and Gertie the Dinosaur

D:Was there color printing?

B: Oh yeah, a lot of color printing, headlines in green, blue, red, color pictures, especially where there were crimes and disasters. We've kept many of these files at the Academy complete with the comics still bound in. We have a fundamental collection of the Hearst newspapers from the 1890s through the 1950s. This includes the Hearst newspapers from Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and so forth. Those are all here for cross referencing. We also have a large collection of the old American tabloids, the New York Graphic, the New York Daily News and so on. All of those are here in bound volumes. We are the only source for hard copy newsprint in the United States because the libraries have thrown it all away and the newspapers have, by and large, despoiled themselves of their own files.

D: Are the people who run these libraries are aware of you so when they get rid of it they know to call you?

B: Yes. Younger librarians are already aghast at what their predecessor did. It's really a generational thing. When the new people come in and they develop an interest in the past and want to look at the old files. They want to know about it, and they find that it's all been destroyed...then they're horrified. They aren't bored with it like their predecessors were.The funny thing is that everyone thinks that they know what is going to be worth preserving in the present and they never do.

D: I was reading somewhere that nostalgia is a modern thing. Longing for things from the past didn't start until the 50's.

B: Well, I don't think that's true, but it's true that people weren't always aware of the value of a thing that was around when they were growing up. Plenty of people in the 1930's had nostalgia for the dime novels of the 1890's.

D: Would people collect those?

B: Enormously! They would pay big bucks for things like Buffalo Bill, Nick Carter, the James Boys, Old Sleuth...all of these magazines were going for big bucks, like comic books are today. Really what keeps interest up is the continued publication. The dime novels came to an end as a publication concept around 1910-15. They disappeared from the news-stand, they weren't seen, nobody bought them or read them. So, when the generation that grew up with them and loved them and collected them died out, so did the collecting interest. Of course there was no later nostalgia for these particular things, you couldn't have it for something you had never seen. The same thing is happening to the pulp magazine. The pulps disappeared in the 1950's and now many people don't even know what a pulp magazine is. There are people that think a pulp is something like the old True Detective magazine because that's all they have ever seen around that looks old. Comic books are still being printed though so, as a result, that collecting balloon hasn't burst. Because of the interest in the current comics in the collecting field there is a concentration of renewed awareness of what you call the golden-age and the silver-age so that the value of these collectibles holds up. Now, in the normal course of things, comic books from the 30's, 40's and 50's would have gone through a cycle of high value, then a total collapse, so that by now, normally, you would be able to pick up Famous Funnies or Action Comics for a couple of bucks because nobody would care about it or want it. But, you have got this enormous hype now generated by the dealers, which convinces everybody that if the value goes up then it means a college education for them if the just buy it now and put it away. Eventually that balloon will also burst. I think that comic books, as such, and to a certain extent comic strips in the early decades of the next century will probably be replaced by computer print-outs of some sort, so the whole concept will go...we'll

NO IDEA YET, EH? SAY MR. QUILLY, WHY DON'T YOU THINK A LITTLE?
YOU CAN'T SAY I DON'T THINK! I DO THINK!
YOU JUST THINK YOU THINK! THE TROUBLE WITH YOU IS, YOU THINK WITH YOUR FACE INSTEAD OF YOUR BRAIN, KNOW THAT ?
ANYBODY CAN SCREW UP HIS FACE LIKE A STEWED PRUNE, BUT THAT AINT THINKING! ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT!
YOU'RE JUST A HIGH-SALARIED PIECE OF CHEESE!

Segar's Thimble Theatre from 1928...a year prior to the introduction of Popeye

see.

D: Going to a book fair recently, I saw all these collectable books, like a Ulysses 1st printing going for $50,000. It makes me crazy knowing that no one's ever going to read it, or even look at the words on the page. It stops becoming a book. It's just a commodity.

B: It's an investment. Look at the comic books that are wrapped in plastic bags and put away in bank vaults. What's the point of having an Action #1 if your banker has it?

D: I don't understand that mentality!

B: Well, it's idiotic because the entire thing has been reprinted several times over, including those large reprints that DC brought out which are delightful. Who would want anything else?

D: There's stuff like Plastic Man that you can't find anywhere else than in the original comic and those investors drive the prices out of a readers range.

B: The only reason for collecting or picking up anything that was printed in the past is because there is no contemporary equivalent available. If you're going to read, as you say, Plastic Man, then you're going to have to go back and buy the old comic books. Some of it's been reprinted but not a great deal.

D: DC was planning to do one but...

B: They have done any number of books on their Batman and Superman heroes but they haven't done one on Plastic Man yet. They did do one on Captain Marvel though. Occasionally, though, you get out of left field an unbelievably unexpected reprint of a classic comic book, like the English reprint of the Captain Marvel versus Mr. Mind series of stories. It has no reason to exist because it doesn't have any market. By publishing it in a limited edition they were able to get a certain amount of money out of it.

D: It got remaindered though.

B: That's the problem. It obviously didn't do as well as they had hoped. But at least we have the book. Otherwise, collectors were going crazy trying to get that whole story in the 30-40 issues of Capt. Marvel that that story appeared in, all of which price out at 50 to 60 bucks each in any kind of decent condition.

D: Do you know the publisher who did that?

B: Hawk Books of London who published my book on Popeye. [pulls out hardback Popeye book with Popeye framed in a life preserver on the cover]

D: I've seen it but never got to look through it.

B: Well, it had a low distribution here. It was imported and because of the pound/dollar differential it was expensive.

D: What do you think of the Fliescher cartoons? Not just Popeye but Superman and so on...

B: The animation on Superman is marvelous, I don't think much of the source material, but as animation it's a marvelous piece of work. The animating of humans was very well done, considering the period.

D: I heard they had a enormous budget.

B: Whatever it was, it returned it's investment because Superman cartoons were hugely popular.

D: They were played before movies?

B: Sure.

D: Something my generation totally lost is cartoons before movies. We were introduced to all the Warner Bros. cartoons through TV.

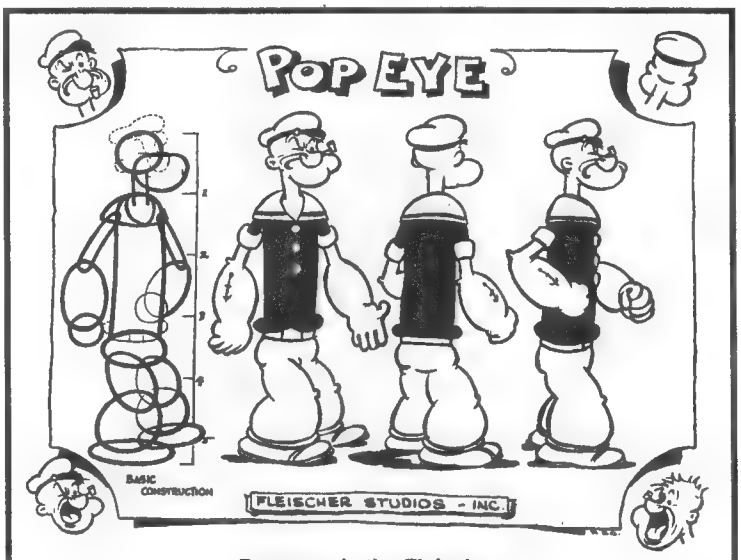
B: Occasionally movie theatres will still put in a classic cartoon just to amuse the audience. There's no structure though, you can't expect it.

D: The Castro theatre is pretty good at maintaining all the things that are great about film. I went to their wide-screen festival to see the Wild Bunch twice and was amazed to see that the theatre was packed, both times. It kind of restores my faith in people to think that all those people wanted to see this "old" movie.

B: What you have got here is this renewal of interest in the past. Most people today are just as aware of Spencer Tracy, Joan Crawford and W.C. Fields as people in the 30's were. These people are publicized, written up and seen on television continually. This is not true of the general television viewing public, the people that watch just the commercial channels or watch these terrible daytime talk shows. These people don't know anything about anything. Obviously the aficionado of the Castro and the college level kids are extremely interested in finding out about the past of movies and comics and books in general.

D: That's one of the few pluses of working in a comic store. I get to play some part in maintaining a public interest in old comics. Every time I get somebody into Popeye, that increases the chance that Popeyes will still be in print 20 years from now.

B: Happily for the comic strip, the interest in cartoons sustains an



Popeye a la the Fleischers

Milt Gross and Joan Crawford from the 20's. Gross Was quite well known.

awareness of the Popeye character so when the Segar material, the comic strip material is reprinted, there's a ready-made audience for it. They see the Popeye name. Segar supervised the Fliescher animated cartoons, by the way, that's why they are so good.

D: Even the color ones?

B: Right.

D: Did he have any say with the voices being muttered like that?

B: It's hard to say. I can't find anything on that. I think that was a studio development, but it may be that Segar had approval on it. The voices are perfect.

D: It's rare that you find that, although the Supermans were pretty good too.

B: Yeah, you accept that as Clark Kent. The Betty Boop stuff that Fliescher did was great.

D: I just heard that they are doing a new Felix show that Milton Knight is in charge of and they are modeling it on those Betty Boops.

B: Disney has released a Betty Boop short, I don't know if they did it, but they released it, and it's very well done. It's in color and it's 12 minutes long.

D: Wow, where did you see it?

B: On the Disney channel, they show it occasionally.

D: I don't get cable, I should though. The East Bay just got the cartoon network, and I hear it's pretty good. The problem with getting cable and being an artist is that I would be watching it too much (for visual stimulation). There's so much good stuff on, old movies and so on.

B: Well, yeah, but you can control it. Tape it and watch when you have to do some filler sketch, doing a background, or filling in blacks, dull stuff like that.

D: Once you had set up the Academy would local artists, like the underground guys, come out and visit?

B: Yeah, all of them. We have a complete file of all the undergrounds. Issues of Zap that were sold out of knapsacks on Haight St. I was there, I bought them.

D: You saw it as an important movement?

B: I saw it as an important movement in comics. The work was very imaginative, very inventive, there was a lot of great stuff.

D: Did a trip to the Academy have a big influence on those artists?

B: What would happen is one or two visits in depth and then they had to return to their own work because they had a lot of work to do, and of course they were socializing a lot, in their own groups. Everybody was here from Crumb to Moscoso to S. Clay Wilson. He just did an illustrated edition of Hans Christian Anderson.

D: Which is such a weird idea!

B: (Laughs) It was the first time he's ever been disciplined. He couldn't put in all the fucking.

D: What kind of person comes to visit the Academy now?

B: Someone who's interested in any of the material we have here for research. They just call up and make an appointment. Could be somebody researching mystery fiction, science fiction, newspapers, material in newspapers, comic strips, pulp magazines, dime novels, penny dreadfuls.

D: Do people come from Europe?

B: Oh yeah. in fact they know more about us in Europe and on the East Coast. In San Francisco they don't even know we exist. Herb Caen hasn't ever mentioned us. It's gotten so that it amuses me now, he thinks he knows all about San Francisco and he doesn't even know that we're here. The establishment San Franciscans are a very insular lot.

D: Yeah that's really true. They never go to Berkeley or any other place in the Bay Area. It's a tight knit little community.

B:Unless you're a restaurant goer or frequent the bars you don't run into these people and they don't know anybody else.

D: Do you correspond with people too?

B: I don't have a lot of time for it, except for business and research. I used to be a demon correspondent back when I was a fan. I wrote loads of letters to people.

D: What are your personal favorite strips?

B: Well, to a certain extent they're reflected in the books that I've edited. You can almost look at those...it would be Polly and Her Pals, Popeye, Secret Agent X-9, Terry and the Pirates, Wash Tubbs and Captain Easy.

D: Humor type things?

B: Humor strips and the serial strips that had a strong humorous component, of course that would mean Dick Tracy. On the other hand the other strips that were grit-toothed and deadly serious, like Flash Gordon and Tarzan, that sort of thing doesn't do that much for me. I admire the art but the story line is just too esoteric, and of course it wasn't very good.

D: Was Burne Hogarth writing the Tarzans while he was drawing them?

B: Hogarth did most of his own script work. There the art work is so overwhelmingly good that you find yourself just looking at the art and forgetting all about the story. The story is just a thin tenuous thread that sort of ties the art together but it's not terribly important to the content, it's not terribly logical either. "How can we justify a big splash panel this week?"

D: Do you think the fact that Krazy Kat and Popeye hold up so well is that the people who were doing it were conscious of the potential of it?

B: I think that's quite true. You'll find that, with some exceptions, the comic strips that were the work of artists that by and large avoided assistants, when they possibly could, because they loved what they were doing so much that they threw themselves into it, were the better strips. There are some exceptions: although Al Capp hardly lifted a finger on Lil' Abner after the 1930's his concern with the story line and the characters was so strong for so long that the quality held up, more or less to everyone's amazement. Generally speaking the strips in which the artist more or less abandoned ship, like Ham Fischer's Joe Palooka, were just totally stupid and dull because he had the name and he had the character and a certain juvenile interest in boxing held the public's attention. On the other hand you had people like Harold Gray, Chester Gould, Herriman, Cliff Sterrett. These are people that didn't want any interference or the least amount of ghosting or outside handling of their work. Now, the more realistic cartoonists such as Caniff and Crane, simply because of the shear volume of work involved, would have to bring in people to fill in backgrounds, to letter dialogue balloons and things of that sort.

D: Crane always had great assistants like Leslie Turner.

B: Exactly. I don't know if you realized this but there were certain cartoonists that would use a ghost because they were ill or on vacation, but they were so concerned about the attribution of their work that they would not sign anything that was not their work . You'll see, for example, in the middle of Wash Tubbs in the late 30s there's a sequence of about two months of strips which are not terribly well drawn, this was before Turner, they are just adequate, but Crane didn't sign any of them. He provides the story line, the dialogue, but..

D: Did he take a break?

B: He was ill I think. Cliff Sterrett made several trips to Europe and while he was away people like Doc Winner filled in. When he semi-retired in 1934 he dropped the daily strip but kept the Sunday so his signature was only on the Sunday. The daily ,of course, had a printed byline because the syndicate insisted on that. The dailies were done by Paul Fung. In Secret Agent X-9 there's a long sequence in which Alex Raymond's work is not

Cliff Sterrett as drawn by Al Hershfield

there, and neither is his signature.

D: Is that in the book?

B: Yes, that's the complete Secret Agent X-9 as bylined by Dashiell Hammet. Raymond bylined for some time after that. It's not the complete Secret Agent X-9, it went on for some time after that.

D: Was Cliff Sterrett influenced by the art movements of his time?

B: He in particular was. That's one of the reasons why he went Europe, to soak up some of that. Stylistically there were noticeable changes in Polly and Her Pals over the years. The awareness of Academic Art by cartoonists was nothing unusual. Rudolf Dirks, who invented the Katzenjammer Kids had paintings in the famous Armory show right along with the ashcan school.

A self-portrait of Cliff Sterrett

D: I knew about Fieninger but I didn't know Dirks was in on that too.

B: Yeah, they were together. Dirks had regular exhibits of his paintings for decades.

D: Have you seen the paintings?

B: They are just what you would expect. They are intelligent and well done, not what we're looking for in this work. It's a different world all together.

D: It's neat to see highbrow cartoonists, though.

B: They weren't very highbrow.

D: Fieninger seems to have really broken into that world. Non-comics artist friends of mine actually know of him as a fine artist. I'm amazed that he's that well known as an artist when he's barely known as a comic artist.

B: He's obscure as a comic artist because he only did that one strip for one year. If he'd kept on things might have been different.

D: Do you find that a lot of people grew up reading the Smithsonian book?

B: Everybody, everybody bought the book. It was enormously well promoted by the Smithsonian press and by the Smithsonian Magazine. It's sales by mail year after year made it one of the best sellers of that year, but of course, the official New York Times Best-Seller List is based on bookstore sales, not on mail sales. It's status as a best-seller is known only to the Smithsonian and my self. My royalty checks on that for ten years were very good.

D: It was in print for ten years?

B: Oh yeah, longer actually.

D: How many copies did it sell?

B: I'd have to go back and check, quite a number through each edition.

D: I got it as a present from my Grandparents. They knew I was into comics and they wanted to get me into a little more highbrow stuff so they got that for me.

B: (laughs) They regarded that as highbrow because of the name, Smithsonian.

D: That and they grew up reading those early comics in the papers.

B: There's still people that think that all the comics must be in the major American research centers. They find it hard to believe that there isn't anything except what I have here. Many think, on the strength of the title of the Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics, think that there is a Smithsonian collection of newspaper comics in the Smithsonian, and of course there is nothing.

D: There's nothing? I figured that they'd have microfilm or something.

B: No, they don't care about it.

D: You're kind of an annex to the Smithsonian.

B: In comics the Smithsonian is an annex to us.

D: Did you have something to do with the comic book book they did?

B: I was supposed to come in on that, and I didn't want to include

Dick Brieffer, a true genuis at comics, in this splash page from Frankenstein #7

any of the superhero material. My reason was, it's all in print, it's everywhere. Why on earth waste space when there's all of this great comic book art which has not been reprinted. The editor wanted to sell the book so he said "No, you've got to have Superman and Batman."

D: It's neat that it had Little Lulu in it, that was the first time that I had read Lulu.

B: It had good stuff in it but I would have had several other thing as well. The people that edited it were quite competent but at the same time the book never developed any status or prestige. It had a couple of printings and then disappeared.

D: It was just things you could get elsewhere. Even those EC things... those are/were everywhere thanks to Russ Cochran and the like. What would you have put in it?

B: More Wolverton, Jack Cole, Dick Briefer, Sheldon Mayer, Boody Rogers and Ed Wheelan. I just couldn't see giving another boost to these meretricious superheros, which I think are submoronic. Not the way that they are being handled now, but the way they came into being in the 30's, 40's and 50's. Now you have a lot of sophistication in the technical handling of the material that gives it a little more panache, different concepts. But, the six or seven year olds that jumped around on their beds reading Superman, in the early years, that was exactly the mental level that the thing was created for, that was it's audience. It had no substantial worth except in the incidental touch of Schuster art, which is often nice, and the Bob Kane art on Batman. The content, the story lines, were imbecilic.

D: I have that problem with Lou Fines work, the art is great but the story...I just can't get past the first page.

B: Superman stuff in the 40's and 50's descended to a depth that has never been paralleled since.

D: I don't know about that. Have you seen some of Image's comics?

B: No. Pretty bad?

D: Pretty bad!

B: The funny thing now is that young kids buy the comic books, but they don't read them because the stuff that is on their level is on TV. They are buying the comic for an investment. They've got the idea that if they put them away they'll make bucks.

D: Working in a comic store, I'm beginning to see the tide turn. Our best selling books are Hate and Eightball, Fantagraphics titles. I'm praying that, maybe, people will get out of it.

B: Why do you think the big ones are buying up the publishers. DC and Marvel are protecting their flanks by buying outfits like Malibu and so forth. That's where the future may lie.

D: Is there any particular strip that has been lost to time that you think is particularly important?

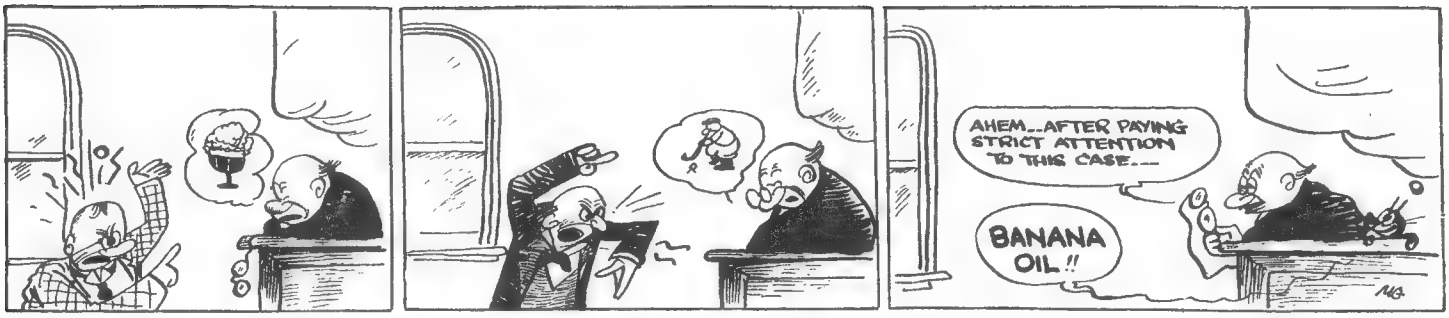
B: Dozens. There's Danny Dingle, Louie Dot Dope, Bunky, Hairbreadth Harry... it's hard to say because I can't always be sure of what people know or they don't know. I'd say Toonerville Folks but there may be a certain awareness of the Toonerville Folks and the Toonerville Trolly.

D: There was a book that came out in the 70s of that strip but I don't think people know about it.

B: I don't think so....there's Everret True, there was a reprint of that but it wasn't very well done. There's the whole Milt Gross line

OUTBURSTS OF EVERETT TRUE
IF YOU'RE BALD-HEADED, BE GAME AND ADMIT IT!! YOU DON'T FOOL ANYBODY BUT YOURSELF WHEN YOU WEAR ONE OF THESE DEAD GRASS MATS!!

The ever true Everett True



COUNT SCREWLOOSE OF TOOLOOSE

By Milt Gross

NO IFS AND BUTS I'M LEAVING YOU NUTS-
NUTTYCREST
TA TA!
THIS LOOKS LIKE SMART PEOPLE HERE-MAYBE I CAN GET A JOB !!!
YAS-YOU COULD BE HANDY MAN
FELIX!
TIME FO' YOU PIANO LESSON
ONE-A-TWO-A... THREEA-FOURA- DOT WASA VERY GOODE!
SKLIBU
DAS CAR BANE READY FELIX
HOME GORKY !!
OUI OUI TIME TO GO TO BED OOH LA LA
FINE LIL FELLER FELIX-BE READY TO GO TO PUBLIC SCHOOL SOON EH?
I SHOULD SAY NOT!! HE'S GOING TO A PRIVATE SCHOOL !!
WHY WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM GOING TO PUBLIC SCHOOL ??
WHAT!!! AND HAVE HIM COME IN CONTACT WITH THOSE FOREIGNERS!!
"IGGY" KEEP AN EYE ON ME!
NUTTYCREST
5-19-29
MILT GROSS
Copyright Press Publishing Co. (New York World) 1929.

Never one to shy away racial issues, Milt Goss' insane hero would escape the Nutty Crest every Sunday, only to return, disgusted with the world. Banana Oil...well, it was the "topper." From 1929

of material, Nize Baby, Count Screwloose of Toulouse, Dave's Delicatessen. Needlenose Noonan, there's an odd one for you, Red Barry but that has had quite a bit of reprinting. It was a major crime strip and almost as good as Dick Tracy. Jim Hardy, I can go on... the Bungle Family which is not too well known now, which is one of the great strips. It's the best thing before Ernie, if you like Ernie.

D: Ernie? What's Ernie?

B: You don't read Ernie in the Sunday comics in the San Francisco Examiner? Ernie is the intrusion of the underground into regular comics.

D: Zippy?

B: Ernie, Zippy is tame compared to Ernie. Zippy is so establishment he squeaks. Ernie is totally anarchistic. I can't believe you haven't read it.

D: I'm the kind of guy who opens the section and only reads his regular strips. I know I shouldn't, but I do.

B: It's the only way you're going to find anything.

D: I'm so used to thinking that there's not going to be anything good in a modern strip section. I read Schulz and maybe a couple of others.

B: He's one of the one or two other people. Bud Grace is the guy that does Ernie. See, I just made a reference there to try and explain an older strip with a new strip and you don't know what the new strip is. It's possible to say that there are new strips that are not very well known that are excellent.

D: So, you think that there is stuff being done now, of worth?

B: We have a kind of a renaissance in comics in the 90's. Generally the average level of newspaper comics is higher than it has been since the 40's. In terms of quality and in terms of the limitation of the medium, the small panels and the refusal of the syndicates to handle much of anything that doesn't involve kids and pets or families or working women. In terms of those limitations, what you've got is very good.

D: I kind of miss the serial thing. I grew up in foreign countries reading Mandrake and the Phantom.

B: How could you read Mandrake?

D: They were printed in India.

B: (Laughs)Yeah, but the strip...at your age...it was so bad.

D: I was a kid and he had a costume on.

B: That was one of the most preposterous things about the strip. Mandrake and Lothar walking down a major city street....

D: Wearing a silly-ass costume!

B: .... and nobody would pay attention to them.

D: I just meant the idea of it being serialized. I look at the Phantom and I'm not particularly interested any more.

B: Well, it (laughs) was better than Mandrake.

D: It was just the idea that I could read this ongoing story, where what was going on today had something to do with what was going on three days ago.

B: The concept was there, without the content.

D: Schulz tries to do it these days.

B: The story running for a week is pretty common in newer strips. Running more than a week is less common, but it does happen. It happens in Ernie.

D: It sounds like the greatest strip ever.

B: Generally speaking, the editors and syndicate people are afraid of anything long because they think, and they're probably right, that the readers don't have an attention span that will carry them through for any long period of time. A lot of people don't read comics every day.

D: It seems like a self-fulfilling prophesy. The syndicates (in the 50/60's) were trying to second guess people by saying that nobody had the attention span and so they made it true.

B: This is true of all media. This self-fulfillment, you see it in motion pictures and in book publication. There used to be a popular idea that the readers wouldn't accept more than one novel from a given writer in a year in, say, mystery fiction. The writers not only wanted more money but they also had more stories to tell, so they would publish under pen-names. Generally speaking that taboo has been broken. The real reason behind it was that the publishing houses didn't want to get to associated with any one writer, to be too dependent on any one writer. By the same token, comic strip syndicates were and have always been fearful of the super popular cartoonist being all of their income. United Features' income is almost entirely the result of Peanuts, if Schulz left them their income would collapse. He's stayed loyal, but he could syndicate his own work, he's made millions. He's grateful because they were with him when he started.

D: Even though they made him change the name.

B: Yeah, well. Other cartoonists just arbitrarily leave their alma mater in syndicates to go off and handle their own work. The guy who does Garfield is now more or less self-syndicated, and some of the others are going the same way.

D: What about Calvin and Hobbes?

B: It's being distributed by a syndicate. The wealth of a cartoonist is not necessarily related to the popularity of the strip. Schulz became a multi-millionaire because he decided to diversify into artifacts, toys of all sorts. Other cartoonists say that they will never do this. Walt Kelly, over the entire history of Pogo, only allowed three sets of Pogo toys, figurines and worked on only two movie adaptations otherwise he held off on all merchandising. There were no stuffed Pogo dolls, there were no endorsements of products or anything of that sort. Schulz will endorse anything, insurance companies, cereals. So that's a real source of income. In other words, it could be that Waterson might like to syndicate his own strip, but he might not have the where-with-all to do that, it costs a lot of money. Some other cartoonists attempted, on a

I'D HATE TO HAVE A JOB WHERE YOU HAD TO GET UP EARLY IN THE MORNING..
I'D HATE TO HAVE A JOB WHERE YOU STAYED IN THE SAME PLACE ALL DAY..
I'D HATE TO HAVE A JOB WHERE YOU HAD TO BE NICE TO EVERYBODY..

Schulz from the 1980's, still great after all these years

very thin shoe string to do it. Like Warren Tufts, who self-syndicated Lance. Because they don't have enough money, usually, to higher a staff, they quickly find out that the bedrock work of packaging up all those proofs, sending them out and keeping records gets to be unending. The money that they make from it doesn't usually pay for the time that they put into it.

D: Did Tufts go back to the syndicates?

B: No, after Lance he just sort of went into freelance, to make the obvious pun. He did comic book work and so forth. The guy who did Rick O'Shay and Latigo, Stan Lynde, is doing pretty well at it though. Both of those were syndicated by the Chicago Tribune, but he didn't like the way the syndicates and newspapers more or less forced his hand by demanding certain things he didn't want to do. So he's now doing his own work up in Montana, publishing his own strip. It's not an enormous income but it's comfortable and he can draw what he wants. Doing his own Latigo books and reprinting Rick O'Shay.

D: Which of those old guys have you met?

B: I've met Caniff, Mort Walker, and all those people. It's not so surprising since, after all, this is the Academy of Comic Art. I've met Will Eisner. He's practically a whole history of comics wrapped up in one man. He brought the comic book into the newspapers.

D: The Spirit sections in Sunday papers. Yeah, he was a real entrepreneur.

B: The whole concept of the splash panel, more or less, came from him.

D: You've got a whole taped interview with Roy Crane, right?

B: A long interview.

D: Will that ever get printed?

B: There isn't that much in it that's different from printed interviews. The guy that interviewed him, not me, tended to pretty much ask the standard questions, and he gave pretty much the standard answers back. We thought about printing it in one of the text accompaniments to the complete Wash Tubbs and Capt. Easy but it didn't seem to be that much different from anything else.

Roy Crane

D: Did you ever meet him?

B: No, never met Crane. He was around before most of the time that I was active. I've never even been to Florida.

D: I'm sure they have some big libraries.

B: Yeah, but not good newspaper files. The climate down there is hell on wheels for pulp paper.

D: So how did the comic you wrote in the 70's, Voltar, come about?

B: (Laughs) The funny thing about Voltar is that it's not listed in the comic book price guide. The people at the Price Guide, because it was published by a underground San Francisco comic publisher, think of it as an underground comic.

D: They don't make any sense. Why can't that be in the price guide?

B: Because the price guide is very concerned about parental entry. All the comic books that they cover in there are at least technically clean. There's no sex, there's no filthy language in anything, so that they don't have to worry about parents saying, "My junior bought your Price Guide and now he's collecting Zap Comics. I never saw such filth in my life!" So they just cut themselves off from that completely on the strength that undergrounds broke all the taboos that were observed in regular comic books. The strange thing is that the same comic book Price Guide has references in it's descriptive matter to things like "big boobs cover," "hypodermic needle cover," and that sort of thing. Apparently that contradiction doesn't worry them. Their point might be that it was once published without legal action at some time in the past, so therefore it must be valid.

D: Back to Voltar.

B: At that time, I was mixing a lot with the people in the minor publishing levels around San Francisco before the development of the retail outlet comic stores. The underground people had ideas about getting into general newsstand distribution. They wanted to try some standard stuff. At that time Alfredo Alcala was more or less at loose ends. His time wasn't being totally commanded by DC or Marvel or any of the big houses. He was still getting himself established here. He had just come over from the Phillipines a short time before. We got along pretty good, so I just did this goofball strip that involved linking the Cthulhu mythos to outer-space, nothing very new about that, and let my imagination riff on it. It was something that would be highly pictorial, that would give Alfredo a lot to work with. That's where Voltar came from. It wasn't my idea, they thought of a name that would look good.

D: Are there any foreign artists that you think are of importance ?

B: Mostly I would say French or Belgians. Some Japanese people are quite good, but I don't know that field well enough to cite them, I'm impressed by what's pointed out in the work, but I don't follow it. In France and Belgium you have strips like Tintin, Spirou and so forth. The body of people that came up with Metal Hurlant, which became Heavy Metal over here, like Moebius, who is wonderful. The great thing about the European field, particularly French and Belgian, is that you have a totally different comic strip structure, where you have a basically magazine format which serves as a source for what we would consider newspaper strip level material here. In other words, in the traditional comic book outlet in the past, American publishers would never have tried to market anything on the level of Spirou or Tintin or a lot of the humorous adventure strip comics, because the juvenile American audience had been so totally corrupted by the superhero comic, they wouldn't buy it. That does seem to contradict the popularity here of such strips as Bone and Groo where there is an audience for exactly the kind of thing that has predominated in the French and Belgian field. The general publishing staff at DC and Marvel will never believe it. I think they brought out Groo just to be sort of a fun and games additional title, they were surprised that it did well.

D: I think Aragones was friends with all those guys too.

B: Sure. It'd also been sort of a success on it's own as a pretty much self-published book. Same thing with Bone, maybe it'll be printed by DC.

D: It was being printed in a Disney book.

B: That's a good start.

D: It sort of bodes well for the future. Maybe they'll see that not everything has to be a superhero.

B: It's funny that you would use "bode" since Vaugn Bode is another guy that falls into the same category. He was semi underground.

D: But you're right, he was pretty popular. People/kids still ask for his stuff all the time. The graffiti kids especially, since he drew in that style...hell, he invented it.

SEE THAT FUNNY LOOKING THING? THAT'S THE EARTH!
Gasoline Alley
KING
CAREFUL, SKEEZIX. YOU'LL BUMP IF YOU FALL OFF THE EDGE! THE IDEA OF STAIRS LIKE THIS WITHOUT RAILINGS!
CAN YOU BEAT IT! THE SERVICE IS SOMETHING AWFUL!
WHAT'S THE MATTER? THREE CARS SCOOTED PAST AND DIDN'T STOP. I'VE RUNG A DOZEN TIMES
MONDAY COME'S AFTER TUESDAY UP HERE.
LET ME OFF! I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING UP.
STOP AT KEWANEE, WAUKEE AND KEWENAW.
UMBRELLAS ARE MORE EXPENSIVE WHEN IT RAINS.
ANYWAY, FINGERS WERE MADE BEFORE FORKS.
NO
YES
YES
NO
I ALMOST FORGOT—IT'S SATURDAY NIGHT!
ANYWAY, A STITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE. BUT IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
INSOMNIA
AND BESIDES WE SHOULD BE GETTING BACK. I LEFT THE HOT WATER TURNED ON.
HOWEVER, THE NIGHT SHIFT COMES ON AT SIX O'CLOCK.
NEVER MIND, SKEEZIX — A PENNY SAVED IS A PENNY EARNED.
OH! SO THAT'S WHERE THE STORM IS COMING FROM!
WELL, I DO BELIEVE THE WINDOW'S OPEN!

Every few months Frank King would produce a particularly arty Sunday Gasoline Alley...like this one from June of 1925

B: Mark Bode is continuing it. I've got the Vaugn Bode archive that was given to me by his brother when he died. It's got his college work and all kinds of stuff.

D: You don't think that modern comics have gone down hill at all?

B: I think were at a higher level than 20 years ago, in terms of the restrictions imposed. As far a crippling restriction, the newspaper comic strip field is an appalling wasteland. You can expand in certain very limited directions.

D: Do you think anything could break those down?

B: I don't think it will happen, but what would have to happen is a situation in which the newspapers might break away from the syndicated concept, as they are doing with the weekly papers, and begin to promote their own cartoonists. The SF Chronicle prints Farley, and other newspapers have had their pet local cartoonists, so that you do have a potential there. The thing that would really bring back the old comics would be exactly the thing that would destroy the present syndicate system and would impoverish two thirds of the artists, if you went back to large size daily comics of the sort that appeared in newspapers routinely in the 10's, 20's and 30's. Back to the time when you had four, five and six newspapers in every city so that these strips were spread among all these papers. You could print the comics large and the cartoonists had lots of room to expand both graphically and in terms of story content. In those days, daily strips were routinely four and six panels, now they're three. Although Ernie insists on a four panel layout. You couldn't do all that now though, because there's only one or two papers in a given city. That means if you picked a few strips and ran them large, the other cartoonists would have no sales at all. You'd have a few cartoonists appearing in every paper. You'd have Peanuts, Calvin and Hobbes, Cathy and a few others that would be picked because of their demographics as much as their quality. All of the experimental or bizarre strips, including such strips as Ernie, would disappear. So, you can't have it any more. In fact the syndicates, by agreeing to, and pushing small postage stamp panel strips, saved the livelihood of most of their cartoonists, by pointing out to the papers that by using the much smaller strips you won't have to devote as much space to them and you can now run 20 strips a day where in the 20's and 30's you only ran six or seven.

D: Most people read the strips first and yet they get this small scrunched down little section in the back.

B: There's nothing, theoretically, stopping papers from devoting four pages to comics and running them all big, but there are two factors that prevent that: one, of course, is the cost of newsprint, which has gone up again, but that seems to be countermanded by the very appeal that you're talking about. If comics have so much to do with the sales of papers, why not give lots of pages to the comics and then enhance the sales of the paper? Well, the other factor is the editorial staff, which despise the comics . If you go down to the Chronicle or the Examiner and talk to the editors and reporters, they will tell you that they don't read the comics, they think they are awful. They hate them because they know, in their heart of hearts, that the comics are selling a good part of the paper. They have to believe that it's their great news stories, their great exposes, their great dramatic presentation of news, their whole function in a classic mode of journalism, that gives them their professional dignity and status. If they thought they were playing second fiddle to the comics or to TV news....the chief barrier that keeps the paper from becoming a tenth or an eighth comics is the editorial hatred of the comics that has prevailed ever since the beginning. Hearst had to fight this in his own newspaper all of his publishing life. They didn't want to run a lot of the comics he loved. They didn't like all of the comic content. The sports page editors hated the idea of a comic strip on a sports page. Hearst knew that people would go to read Barney Google on the sports page. Just as Captain Paterson of the News Tribune papers knew that people would read Moon Mullins on the sports page, that they would turn to the sports page to read them.

D: Are there plans for a Moon Mullins strip reprint in the works, is there any interest by a publisher?

B: It's long over due, but here you have that contradiction of even when they have great interest, they are still afraid of doing reprint books. Dennis Kitchen, for example, is a Gasoline Alley freak, he adores the strip, but he suspects that it would be a financial disaster. He's gone ahead and taken a plunge with Lil' Abner but he says the book doesn't make him any money. He's supposed to go on with my Krazy and Ignatz series, yet for a year now he's had the entire book in hand, he's paid for it, my introduction, the layout, the art, the title, everything but it still hasn't appeared in print.

D: My last question is: How should people go about visiting the Academy?

B: Just make an appointment a day ahead. I wanted to point out the main purpose of the Academy aside from the newspaper aspect, is that we have enormous collections of popular fiction in the crime history, science fiction, detective fiction, sea fiction, pulp magazines, motion pictures and books on motion picture history. The thing that unifies all of these is basically the concept of the series character, that is the hero or anti-hero that's carried from book to book, from movie to movie, and from comic to comic, as well as the genre concept per say, the subjects. What we have here is the countries only cross-reference research library, where you can move from comics into detective fiction, from science fiction into motion pictures, following the trail of ideas, of character concepts, so forth and so on, from one genre to the other, all in the same place without having to go from one University's special collection all the way across the country to another University's special collection.

D: So you think there is a lineage of say Dime Novels to Underground comics?

B: Of course, the pulps went right into the comic books. The Shadow, Doc Savage and so forth. Recently you had a lot of borrowing from the pulps. Eclipse, before they went out of business was starting a Spider comic book. You had a G-8 comic book that came out from Dell. There was a Shadow comic strip that ran for four years.

D: Are there any dime novel characters that were continued?

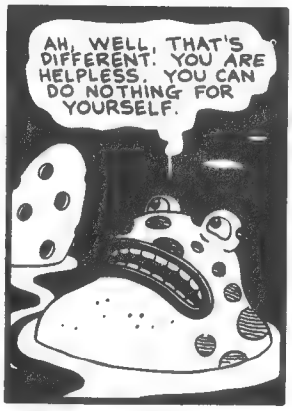
B: Sure, Nick Carter was not only a comic strip, it was a dime novel, it was a pulp, it was a motion picture. Walter Pidgeon played Nick Carter in the movies.

If you want to visit the Academy of Comic Art call (415) 681-1737

Needlenose Noonan from 1934

REVIEWS

JIM #5
by Jim Woodring



I have to admit that for a while I was feeling kinda bored with Jim. It was starting to seem like it was just some guy walking around and seeing weird stuff happen (which is what it is) and I just wasn't connecting with it anymore. However, a couple of months ago I reconnected with the beauty of it, and realized once again how great and unique the comics of Jim Woodring are. I believe this latest issue is my favorite issue of the series so far, even though some of the art seemed a little more rushed and less fully realized than some earlier issues (particularly in the story "The Stairs"). The first story "Dive Deep," is a nice little fable for adults, maybe about the fear of the unknown, but also about being satisfied with what you've already got. The full color Frank story "Peeker," was more of the little guy wandering around seeing weird stuff, and I liked it. Those colors are truly beautiful. I really appreciate the fact that a weird little comic like this can exist. It's pretty amazing.
Published by Fantagraphics

SILLY DADDY/KING CAT FLIP #1
by Joe Chiappetta and John Porcellino

Joe gave me a preview of this book at APE, and unlike other issues of Silly Daddy and King-Cat, I guess this is going to be printed up in the traditional comic book format. The King-Cat half reprints KC #47, which is a great comic, that I already reviewed in here last issue. If you didn't get it (KC #47), that's reason enough to pick up this comic. I'm going to focus on the Silly Daddy half since that is the all-new half of the book. This would be the eighth issue of Silly Daddy, and is probably the best issue yet. I like Joe's art, even though technically speaking it's not that great. There's just an innocence to it that really works. The one thing about it I didn't like was the way all the panels touch each other. Maybe I'm just anal, but with no panel gutters at all it becomes a little distracting.

The apparently autobiographical story focuses on Joe hanging out at a bowling alley called "Eden Lanes," where he goes to drink and hang out with friends and familiar faces on the nights when his daughter "Coach" is at her mother's house, and explores his hopelessly one-sided crush on Eden's married, slightly crazy bartender, Jennifer. He asks his friends about her, creates fantasy worlds of their life together in his head, tries to talk to her, but doesn't seem to actually take her feelings into account. I think he doesn't see her as a real person, but just obsesses on her being the person he wants her to be.

What it makes for is interesting reading, maybe somewhat too similar to the recent Peepshow #1 by Joe Matt, but in a lot of ways I liked it better than Peepshow, because Joe Chiappetta sees more magic in the world, and seems more interested in truth, than the self-flagellation of Joe Matt.

If you can't find a copy of this in your local store you can get one by sending US$3.00 to Joe Chiappetta @ 2209 Northgate, N. Riverside, IL 60546

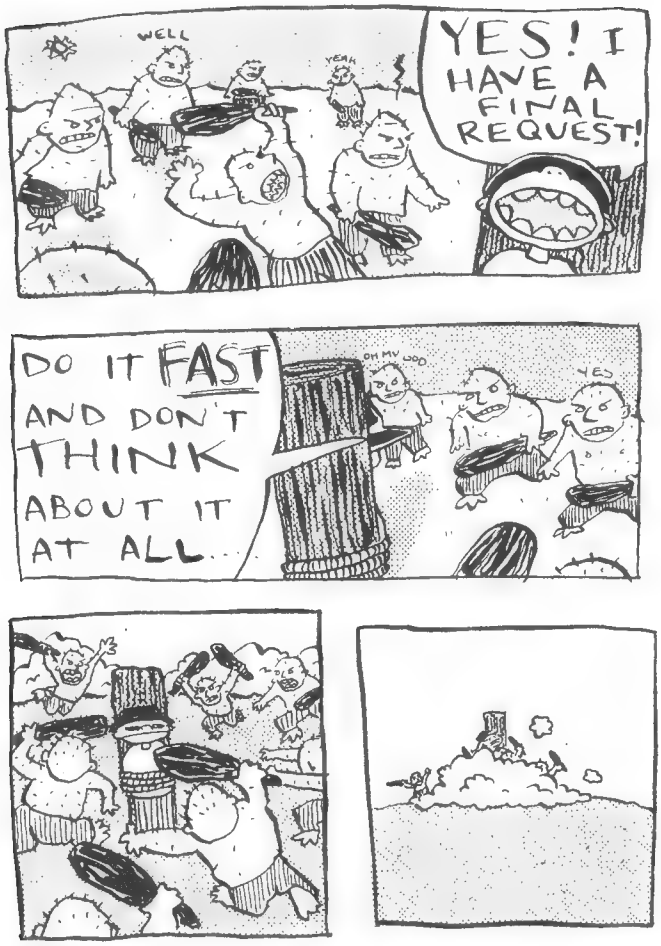
TERRIFYING STEAMBOAT STORIES #4
by Matt Madden

Terrifying Steamboat Stories is the okay new comic by Matt Madden. The problem was there were just too many little short stories, and nothing to really draw me in and involve me. Hell, it's only twenty pages long and there's eleven different stories in it! I must admit that it's a nice looking little book, and I really liked the one page "A Walk," (which was printed in one of the mini issues of DAC), and found the back page story "Notices," a parody of his reaction to getting a negative review of his last issue to be pretty funny, but overall it was a pretty weak and disjointed issue. For a copy send $2.00 to Matt Madden at P.O. Box 49267, Austin, TX 78765

TOMATO
by Ellen Forney

Nope, I didn't like it. Well, I liked the art okay, but the stories just bored me. Overall, I'd have to say I pretty much hated it. I'm not going to write a more in depth account because I don't want to bother, it makes me feel bad though, because I'm sure that Ellen's intentions were good. Sorry.
Published by Starhead

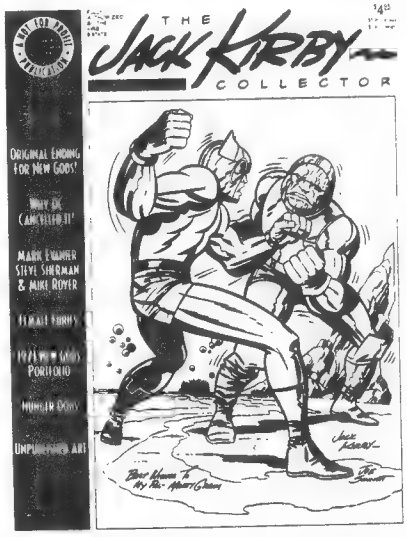
NEW HAT by Tom Hart



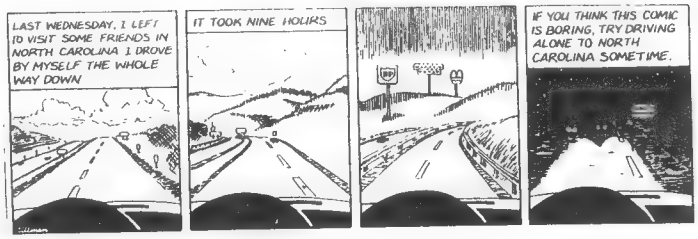
The back of New Hat describes the contents as "a unique triptych of elegant stories," but I think I would describe it more simply as a bit of a mess. I guess, it's a pretty unique book, and I applaud Tom Hart for that, but at the same time it fails to be very engaging. The first eight pages feature a near nonsensical rant by poet Parson Pardon Parcel, while he is tied to a stake and surrounded by shirtless, hairy, fat, little men. Lines like, "Sequestering off your degrees of bombastic approbation into plackets of despite and repression, finally securing your assiduous fealty to the regressive repletion of your concerted condemnation," almost made me put down the book before the end of the fist "triptych." Luckily I didn't, because the big payoff in the book comes on the eighth page of the book when the little men beat the poet to death with their clubs. At that point, New Hat, finally grabbed my interest, only to lose it again on the next page, and for pretty much the rest of the book. A guy, who we later learn used to be the president (until he gave it up to wander the earth and write poetry), rings a bell, kids are lectured by their warrior father, and then we learn the story of the president (featuring the annoying reappearance of the poet Parcel from the first section). Tom Hart expects us to wade through far too much bad poetry, and it's just not worth it (for example, "Bring fruit for the homely. Give alms to the Dane. Stoke the cold smoke that rose from the rain...Embrace the debase and follow the vane...Juice will unloose when the soul's terrain."). My main problem with New Hat is that it just isn't very interesting, and I think that's a pretty essential part of a good story. One good thing about the book though is Tom's art, which has grown a little more charming since his last book, "Hutch Owen's Working Hard." Anyway, I'm going to keep my eyes open for his next book, because I still think Tom Hart has the potential to do something really great.
Published by Black Eye

The Jack Kirby Collector #6

The idea of a whole magazine about dead artist Jack Kirby is pretty weird, kind of obsessive and dangerously geeky, but at the same time, it's about a really great and important comic-book artist, and has plenty of interesting information. The sixth issue is definitely the best one so far...double the normal length at a respectable thirty-six pages. It focuses on Kirby's Fourth World stuff for DC, which is probably my favorite Kirby stuff, so naturally I found it fascinating. There are illuminating feature interviews with Mark Evanier and Steve Sherman (Jack's assistants during this period), plus part two of an interview with the best Kirby inker, Mike Royer. All the interviews are interesting, fact filled, and illuminating, without being too long or tiresome. Another exciting aspect of this issue is the large amount of Jack Kirby's original pencil art that is printed to illustrate both the interviews and several articles. Also reprinted in black and white are eight pages form The New Gods Portfolio. To receive your copy of this almost insane magazine send US$5.00 payable to TwoMorrows Advertising at 502 Saint Mary's St., Raleigh, NC 27605.



FROM THE CURVE #1 by Robert Ullman


LAST WEDNESDAY, I LEFT TO VISIT SOME FRIENDS IN NORTH CAROLINA. I DROVE BY MYSELF THE WHOLE WAY DOWN
IT TOOK NINE HOURS
IF YOU THINK THIS COMIC IS BORING, TRY DRIVING ALONE TO NORTH CAROLINA SOMETIME.

This comic collects a whole bunch of daily strips Robert did for his college newspaper, The Daily Kent Stater, plus a few other ones he did for the zine Circle Press. Robert's major weakness is his art, which is functional, but just kind of bland. From The Curve is redeemed though, by Robert's major strength, which is his storytelling and choice of subject matter. Most of the strips fucus on everyday life, autobio type things, but do so in a way that was really interesting. Some of the strips are kind of funny, but most of them are just kind of nice...which is a good thing. I thought the best story in here was a full page story about a Bob Mould/Sugar show he goes to. Another good strips focuses on buying a new CD but finding out that most most of the tabs that hold the disc in place in the jewel box are broken, featuring one of the best lines in the book, "We can put a man in space, but we can't invent a CD case that won't break?" Overall, while this isn't the greatest collection of comics, it's better than most and is definitely worth sending two bucks for to Robert Ullman at 1636 E. Main #302, Kent, OH 44240

JAMES KOCHALKA SUPERSTAR #7
by James Kockalka

With this issue I've decided I really don't like the way James draws. The art in this comic is simple and functional, but annoyingly bad. It seems like he doesn't even try. Also, the way James uses zip-a-tone is ugly and distracting. It's a shame that the art is so awful, because as a writer it seems like James is getting better. This issue features his most interesting and well written story yet, The Good Boy. The first half of The Good Boy focuses on James as a young boy, drawing comics and hanging out with his best friend. When his friend starts smoking pot, it scares James and he doesn't do any. Later, the story jumps forward to James in his late teens, and we witness him transformed by time and the drugs that he now freely ingests. The contrast between his opinions as a small child and as a teenager is what make this an interesting meditation on the way people can change, even if they don't want to. James point, that "in growing up you lose innocence but gain power," is very insightful. For a copy send $2.00 to James Kochalka at P.O. Box 8321, Burlington, VT 05402

PALOOKA-VILLE #7
by Seth

Palooka-ville is a comic best read very slowly. There's an incredible amount to like about this issue, featuring part four of Seth's "It's A Good Life if You Don't Weaken" storyline. As always Seth's art is beautiful to look at...I mean, every panel is just perfect. Palooka-ville isn't the place to go for excitement and adventure, but if you're able to appreciate the quite moments in life, there's no better comic. Most of this issue has Seth wandering around town. The content is his thoughts, impressions and memories of the town he once lived in while growing up. Especially beautiful are scenes when he is remembering playing in his back yard with a folded newspaper boat in a rain-puddle, and another scene where he spies on a kid playing in his yard with his dog. Another section I particularly liked had two teenagers taunting Seth as he walked along the road. He could think of no appropriate response, but thinks to himself, "I hate people. Wherever you go...you always seem to run into these same types. Aggressive, confrontational, looking for trouble. Why would anyone want to ridicule a complete stranger on the street anyway? What bugs me most, I guess, is that I never have anything clever to shout back. The people in the funnies always have a good comeback."

Published by Drawn & Quarterly

PICKLE #7 by Dylan Horrocks

OH AND THIS IS HIS LADY NIGHT? CAN I READ IT?
SURE. YOUR DIRECTOR MIGHT NOT APPROVE, THOUGH.
FUCK MY DIRECTOR. OR ON SECOND THOUGHT'S DON'T- HE'D PROBABLY GIVE YOU A PART IN HIS NEXT MOVIE.
YOU DON'T MEAN YOU-
HEY- GIVE ME SOME CREDIT - WHAT DO YOU THINK I'VE GOT AN AGENT FOR?
SHEEIT! THIS AIN'T THE DAUGHTER OF DARKNESS I KNOW! PAGE 5 AND NOBODY'S DEAD YET! AND HER CHEST - WHY, IT'S ALMOST BELIEVABLE!
HA! YOU'RE READING A REAL COMIC NOW, MATE!
WHAT POWER THE ORB HOLDS! COULD IT BE THAT THIS IS WHAT TURNED ARLON TO EVIL? AND WHAT MAY IT DO TO KYROS... OR TO ME?!
LADY NIGHT! HAVE YOU THE ORB?!
HAVE PATIENCE, KYROS!
HERE!
LET ME HAVE IT!! WITHOUT IT WE ARE BOTH LOST!!
YOU ARE ALREADY LOST, KYROS - LOST TO EVIL AND DARKNESS! I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO GAIN THE ORB OF ARLON AND ITS POWER!

Already up to it's seventh issue, Pickle continues to delight. Without a doubt, Pickle is one of my very favorite comics, so if you have yet to read it, I demand you search out all the back issues and do so now. This issue mainly consists of part two of "Stars," a story more complicated than I want to describe here, other than to say that it deals with making big-time comics in a hilarious and interesting manner. As always, Dylan's seemingly simple art continues to charm. Published by Black Eye. If you can't find Pickle in your local store, please write to Black Eye at 5135 Parc Ave., Suite #5, Montreal, QC H2V 4G3 to inquire about back issues. It's really worth it.

JAZZBO #2
by Eric Searleman

This is a truly weird comic. It starts with a giant egg materializing in the center of downtown Phoenix, Arizona, but it's focus quickly shifts to a series of apparently autobiographical episodes from Eric's life. Although most incidents in the comic are

rather mundane (Eric does his laundry and has a discussion with the attendant about the rock band KISS, Eric has to write an obituary at his job, Eric's girlfriend tries, but fails to fix his toilet, and he has to call a plumber, an old friend who he hasn't seen for a long time visits, Eric goes to a concert, and finally, he considers drinking a beer), the way in which they're presented makes them fun. At the end of the story the egg cracks open, Phoenix is covered in darkness for two days, and then the sun comes up. I'm not sure what it means, but it was pretty good reading anyway. Searleman's drawing style is simple and fun to look at, but sometimes a little raw. I have no doubt that as Eric writes and draws more comics, he is bound to get better.
Published by Slave Labor

THE MAGIC WHISTLE #8
by Sam Henderson

Another fine issue of The Magic Whistle from Sam Henderson. Yes it's funny, but it's kind of the same as all the other ones that came before it, so since I've read all the previous ones, it's just starting to seem a little tired, but you'll probably laugh if you send Sam $2.00 for a copy at 14 Bayard St. #3, Brooklyn, NY 11211

SELF-LOATHING COMICS
by Robert and Aline Crumb

REMEMBER WHEN WE USED TO SLEEP 'TIL 2 PM.. 'TIL THE MAIL CAME?
YEAH, AN' THEN WE'D HAVE A LEISURELY BREAKFAST, MAYBE HAVE SEX, LISTEN TO RECORDS + THEN WORK 'TIL 3 AM!
THAT WAS A LIFETIME AGO... BEFORE WE HAD A CHILD + AN EMPIRE

Half of the comic is by Robert, and half of it is by Aline, and all of it is great (obviously). Both of their stories are autobiographical, day-in-the-life type things, and weirdly, both only go about half-way through their days before coming to the end, and I didn't get the impression that there was going to be a part two (maybe I'm wrong). Robert's art is better than ever, and Aline's writing is more interesting than ever...I even thought her cover was beautiful. The greatness of the Crumbs is pretty much a given at this point, and I really can't think of anything to add to the lack of debate. I imagine you've already read this comic anyway...
Published by Fantagraphics

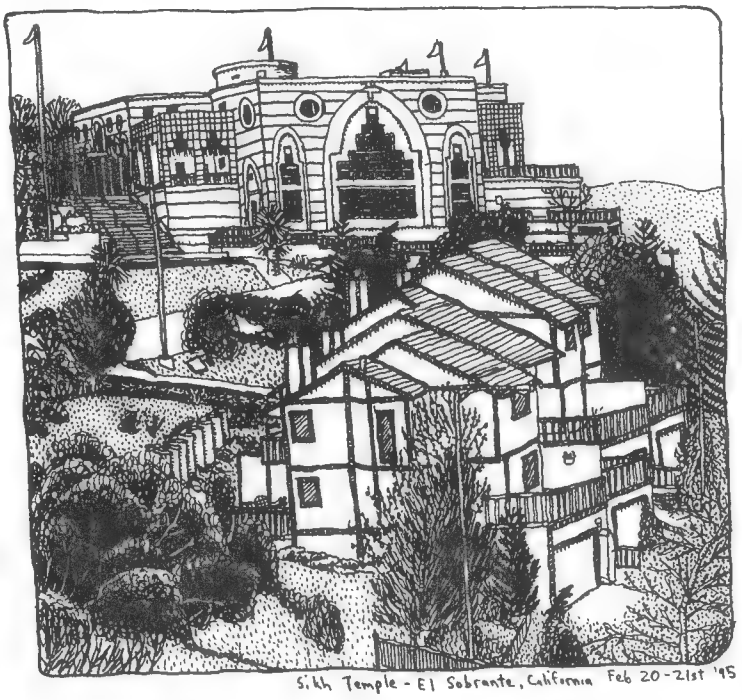
MUSE #1 by Paul Madonna

Muse is a nice little package of a mini-comic with good production values, but not the best entertainment values. The bulk of this issue consists of Paul complaining either about how he wants to draw a comic but has no ideas, or about how he screwed it up with his girlfriend. One story called, "I Met Daniel Clowes Yesterday," works the best. It's the only straight-forward

LAST NIGHT I LAID DRUNK ON MY FLOOR, TOO INCAPACITATED TO EVEN CONSIDER SITTING UP FOR A SIP OF WATER, LET ALONE CLIMBING TO MY LOFT. NOT EVEN WANTING TO THINK THAT I DID NOTHING NICE FOR HER THAT NIGHT ON HER BIRTHDAY. I JUST GOT DRUNK.
AND IT'S TIMES LIKE THOSE, STARING AT THE DOUBLE CEILING - PRAYING TO PASS OUT, THAT I'm HAPPY TO BE ALONE, SWIMMING IN MY OWN ACTIONS, SWALLOWING THE LAWLESSNESS AROUND ME, CAUSE I DESERVE IT.

Sala) at a signing), it at least makes sense. Paul's art is very scribbly and dense, filled with insane patterns, and definitely unique. Even though at times I had to force myself to keep narrative in the book, and while it's not very exciting reading (it's about how he meets Dan (as well as Adrian Tomine and Richard reading the book, in the end I was glad I did, because Muse wasn't as bad as most of the other mini-comics out there. To get a copy send $1.00 to Paul at 634 Lyon St., San Francisco, CA 94117-1333

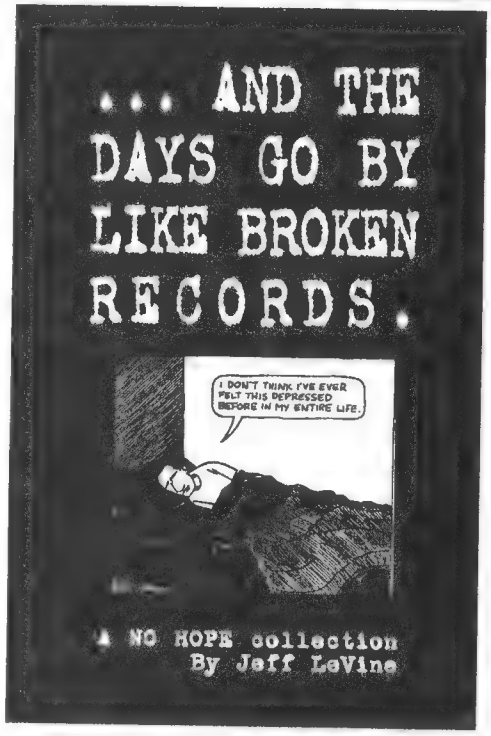
YOU COME TOO
by Jeff Zenick



You Come Too, is the beautiful new mini-comic/zine by Jeff Zenick. Actually it's more of an illustrated journal than a "comic," but it's great, so who cares what it "is." The main section is called "Suburban Sojourn Mish-Mosh," and contains various writings and drawings that Jeff made from January 10th to January 18th, 1995. His drawings in this section are mostly of suburban houses, the insides of fast-food restaurants, and the insides of buses. The writing captures a lot of what he spent his time doing over those eight days, plus describes the circumstances that led to the drawing of each picture. The second section, called "Industrial Wasteland," features several beautiful pictures of aging industrial machinery and buildings, plus the story of how and where he drew the pictures and the people that approached him as he drew. This is a unique and beautiful book that is definitely worth sending for. You can probably get one by sending two bucks to Jeff Zenick at P.O. Box 877, Tallahassee, FL 32302

SLAVE LABOR Graphics

COMING THIS FALL FROM SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS

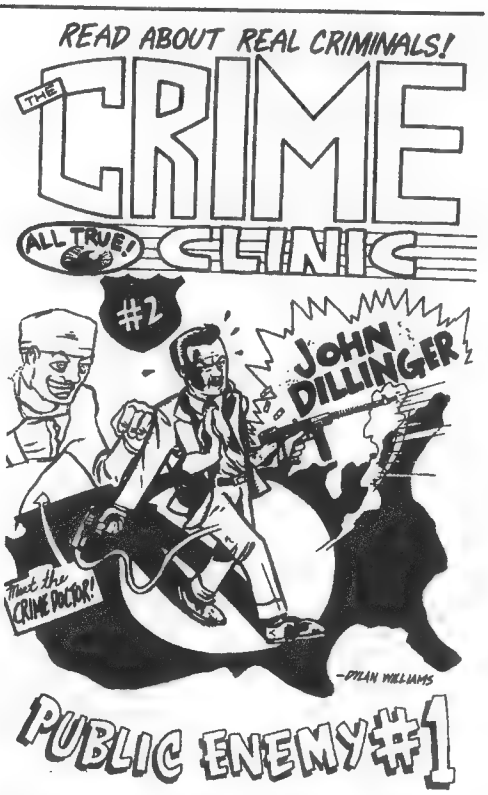

... AND THE DAYS GO BY LIKE BROKEN RECORDS.
I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER FELT THIS DEPRESSED BEFORE IN MY ENTIRE LIFE.
A NO HOPE collection
By Jeff LeVine

This nifty trade paperback collects the first six issues of NO HOPE by Jeff LeVine along with some of his mini comics.

$15.95

All true crime stories as told by Dylan Williams. This issue features John Dillinger. Issue #1 is still in print. Very cool!

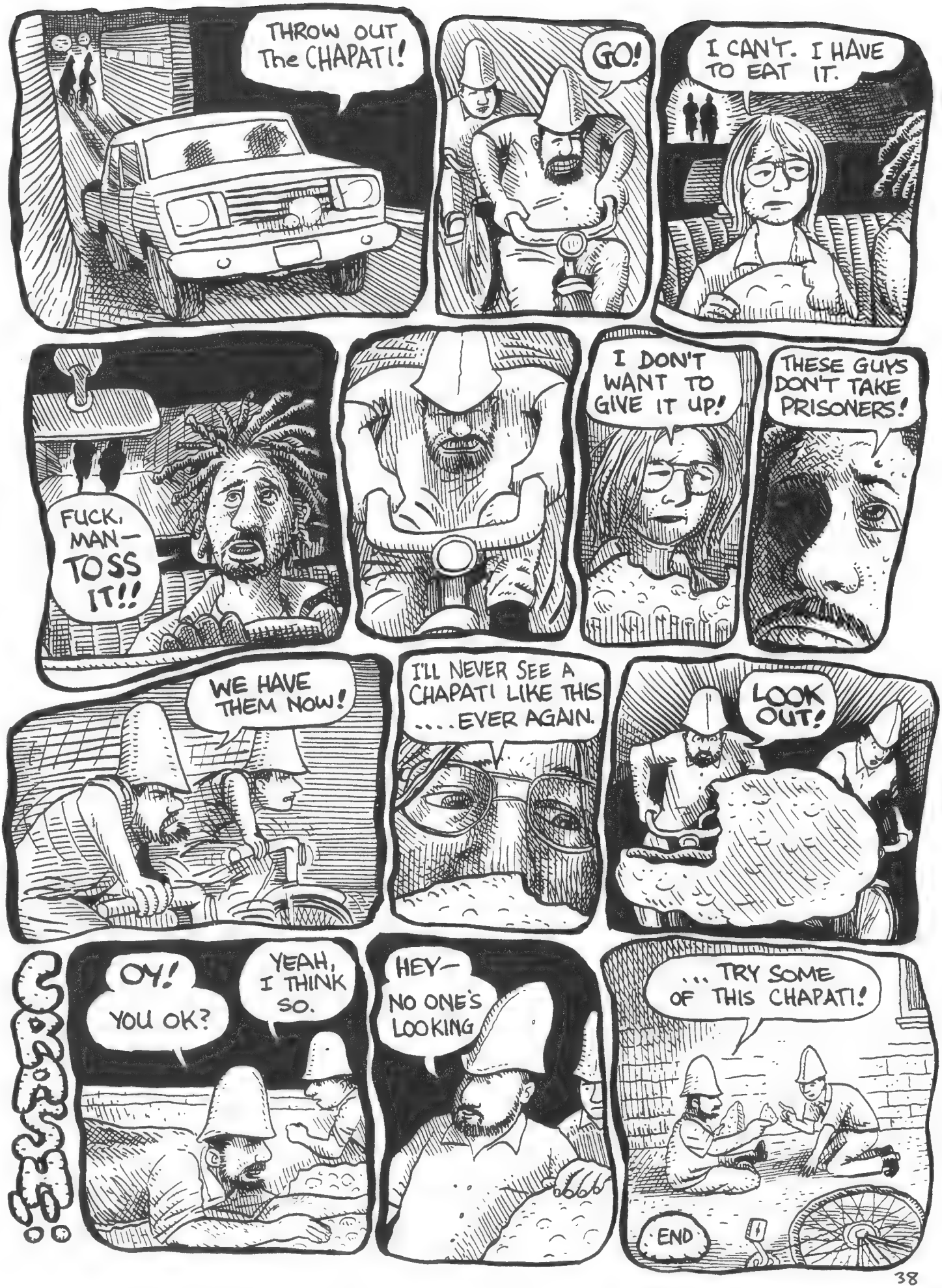
#1 - $2.95
#2 - $2.95



Get these from your local comic dealer or, if he's too much of an asshole, order directly from Slave Labor. Call 1-800-866-8929 for a FREE catalog!

CHAPATI PATROL

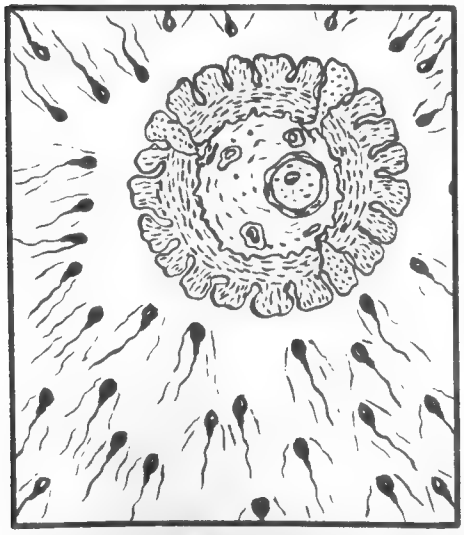
BY DAVID LASKY


THROW OUT The CHAPATI!
GO!
I CAN'T. I HAVE TO EAT IT.
FUCK, MAN— TOSS IT!!
I DON'T WANT TO GIVE IT UP!
THESE GUYS DON'T TAKE PRISONERS!
WE HAVE THEM NOW!
I'LL NEVER SEE A CHAPATI LIKE THIS ....EVER AGAIN.
LOOK OUT!
OY! YOU OK?
YEAH, I THINK SO.
HEY— NO ONE'S LOOKING
... TRY SOME OF THIS CHAPATI!
END

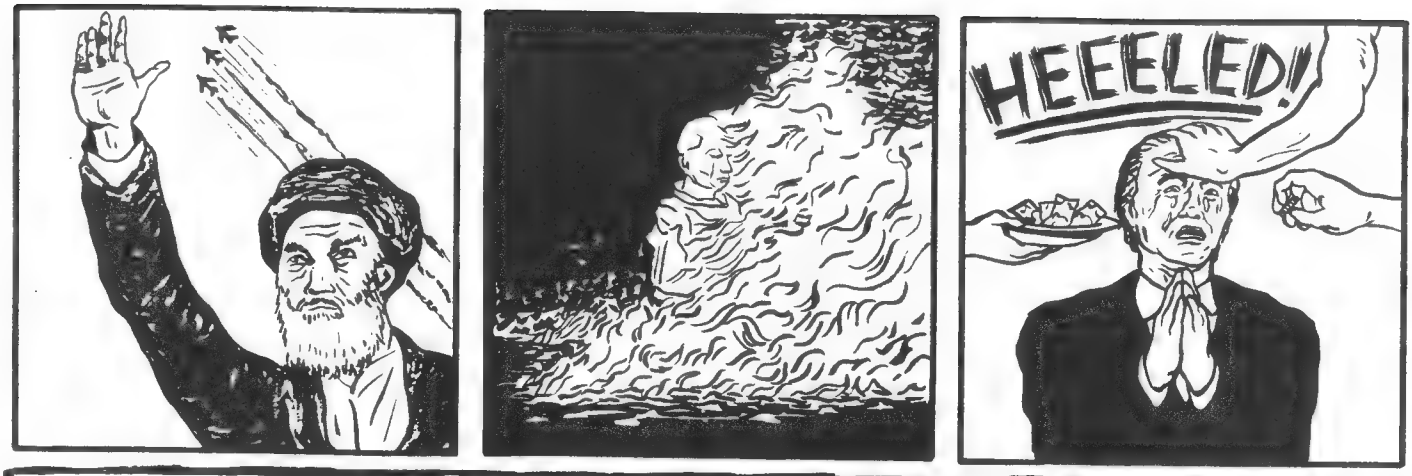
OLDE WOODEN JOE

©1994 Garret Izumi & Christian Osborne

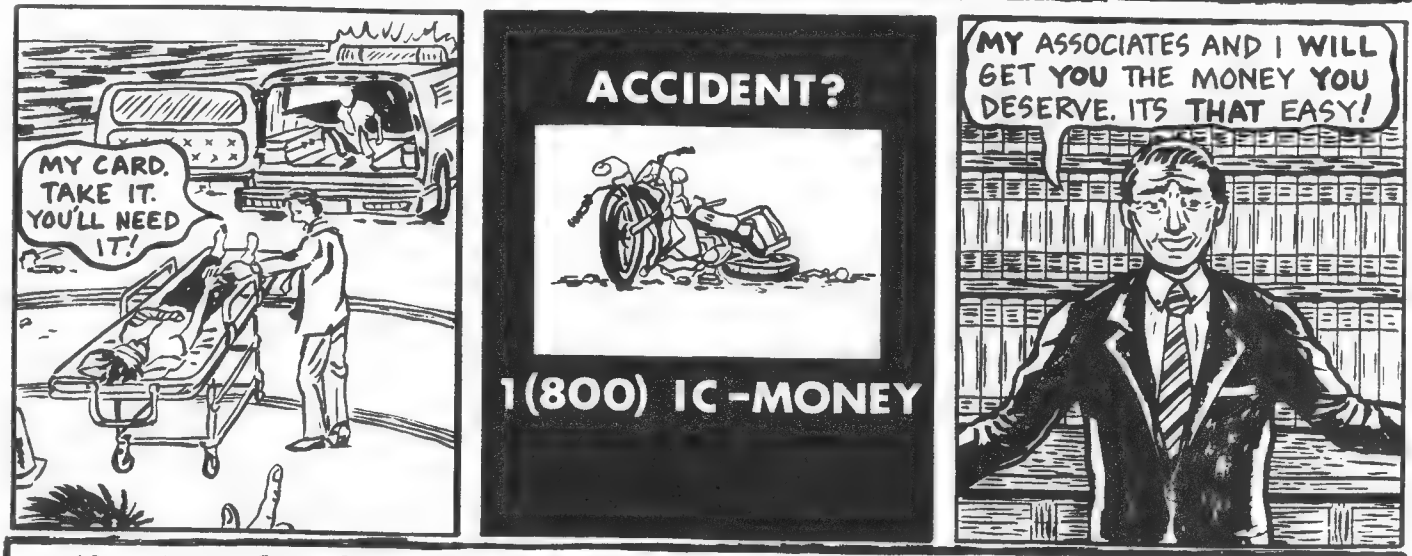
NOBODY GETS DOWN IN LEATHER ALL WEATHER INCANTING THE VOODOO OF WHAT HE DO AND SHE DO LIKE YOU DO



NO DOCTOR WITHE SCALPEL OR PRIEST FULL OF SHRAPNEL CAN CUT THROUGH THE TOWERING BABBLE OF BIBLERS LIKE YOU DO



ANY MAJOR RELIGION WITHE INFINITE WISDOM EVENTUALLY WILL DEVISE A WAY TO LAY THE WHIP CROSS YOUR ASS WHILE SPEWING THEIR MASS LEAVING OLDE WOODEN JOE WITHE NOWHERE TO GO EXCEPT INTO FLAMES !



NO LAWYER CAN USE A PEN LIKE A KNIFE *SLASH!* TO DANCE IN THE FOUNTAIN OF BLOOD MONEY MAGIC LIKE YOU DO

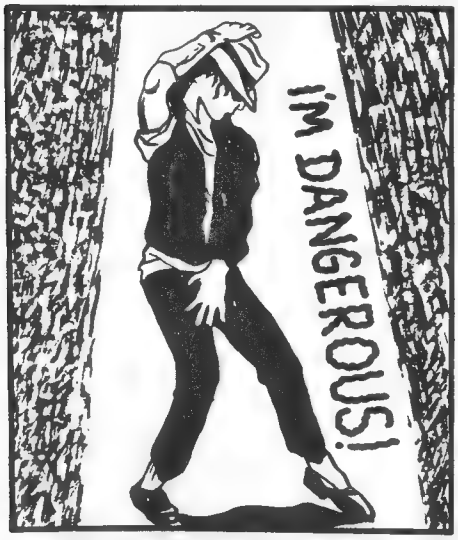
NO POLITICIAN CAN LICK HIS FINGERS AND GRIN AT THE MILLIONS OF CHILDREN WHO'LL NEVER GET IN LIKE YOU DO

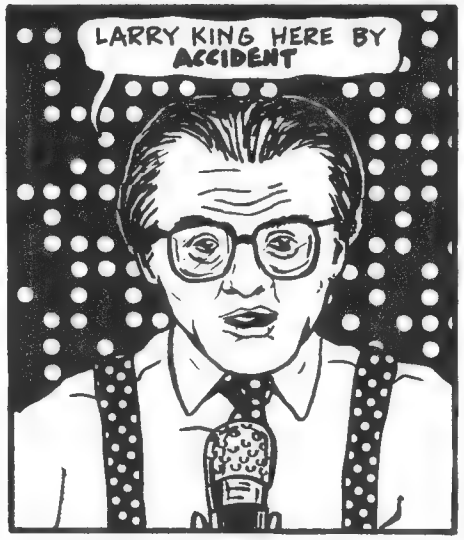
He's everything Burt wasn't
. . . he's got a pure anima
magnetism that drives me wil
Only weeks after being dumped by hu
by Burt Reynolds, Loni Anderson h
found happiness again — in the arms o
lawyer four years her junior.
By DAVID WRIGH
For the past month the
actress has been secretly
romancing her new lover
Geoffrey Brown, a 43-year-
old blue-eyed bachelor
who's been helping her
mend the heartbreak of
her split from Burt.
"Loni is absolutely goofy
about Geoff!" a friend de
"She told me, 'I died'
when Burt served the
papers. I thought I coul
be happy again.
" 'But now Geoff is
bringing me back to l
tender and warm an
and always there for
" 'He's everythi

irrors looking for wrinkles.
high school to pursue the life of a rock star — leaving a
She's terrified of growing old
Her beloved son has run off to be a rock star
She's starved for love — with no men in sight
r and deeper into
and was absolutely humiliated. She chased Elijah to his room. And he

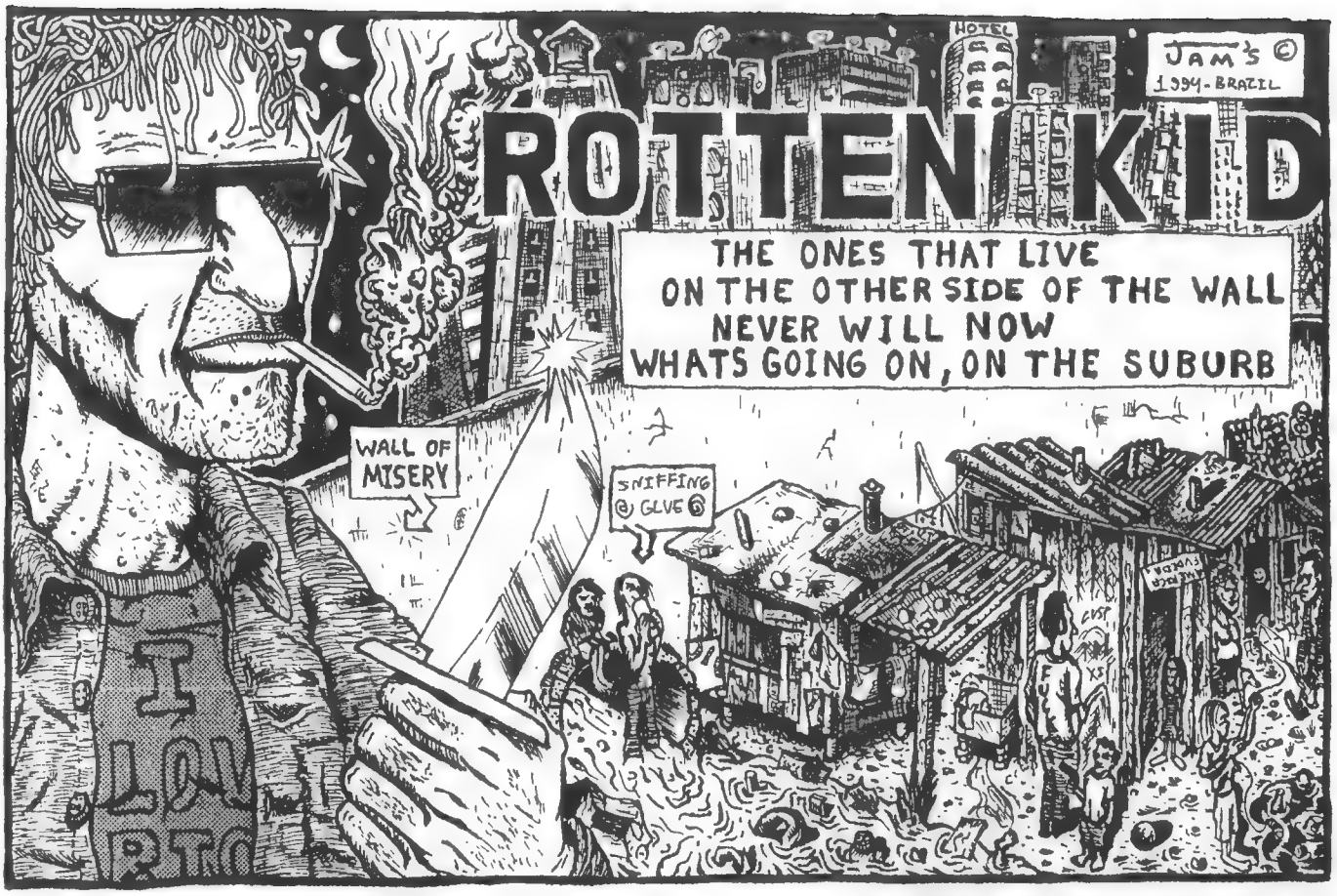
DEEP IN THE FOREST LATE AT NIGHT, DANCING NAKED WITHE LILITH IN THE BLOODRED MOONLIGHT THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE DEFENDERS OF RIGHT ARE CONSIGNING THEIR ELDERS BY NAME INTO FLAME

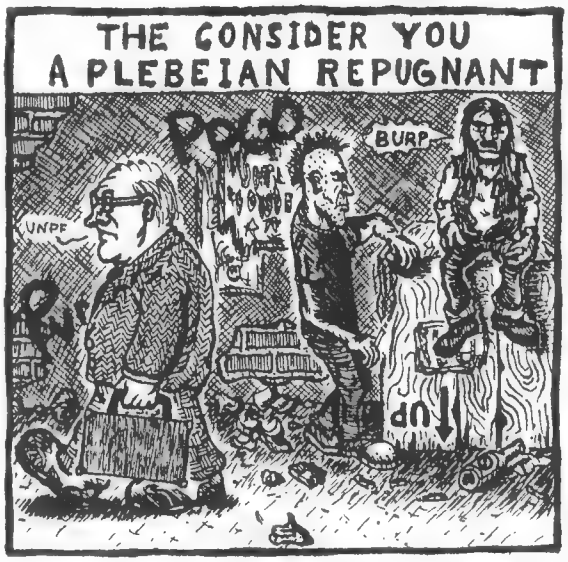
NO TELEVISION OF THE SPLATTER PARADE IS NEARLY AS FRIGHTENING AS WATCHING WHO BLEEDS LIKE YOU DO

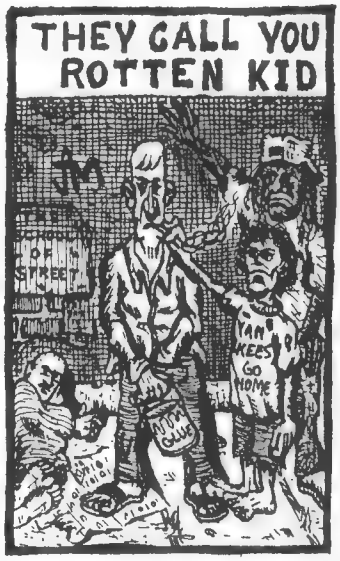


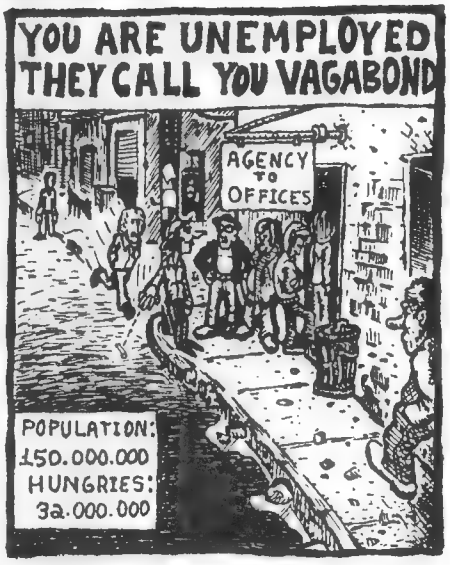


NO NONVEGETARIAN SERIAL KILLER CAN WADE THROUGH THE PIECES OF BODY AND SOUL LIKE YOU DO.

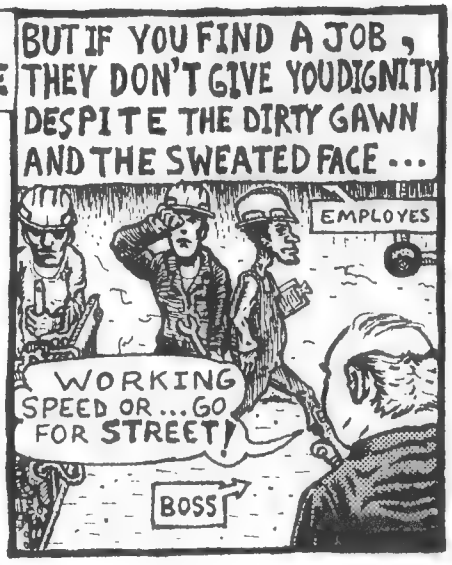

ROTTEN KID
JAM'S © 1994-BRAZIL
HOTEL
THE ONES THAT LIVE
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL
NEVER WILL NOW
WHATS GOING ON, ON THE SUBURB
WALL OF MISERY
SNIFFING GLUE
I LOV
RIO


THE CONSIDER YOU
A PLEBEIAN REPUGNANT
BURP
UNPE
UP


THEY CALL YOU
ROTTEN KID
YANKEES GO HOME


YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED
THEY CALL YOU VAGABOND
AGENCY TO OFFICES
POPULATION:
150.000.000
HUNGRIES:
32.000.000

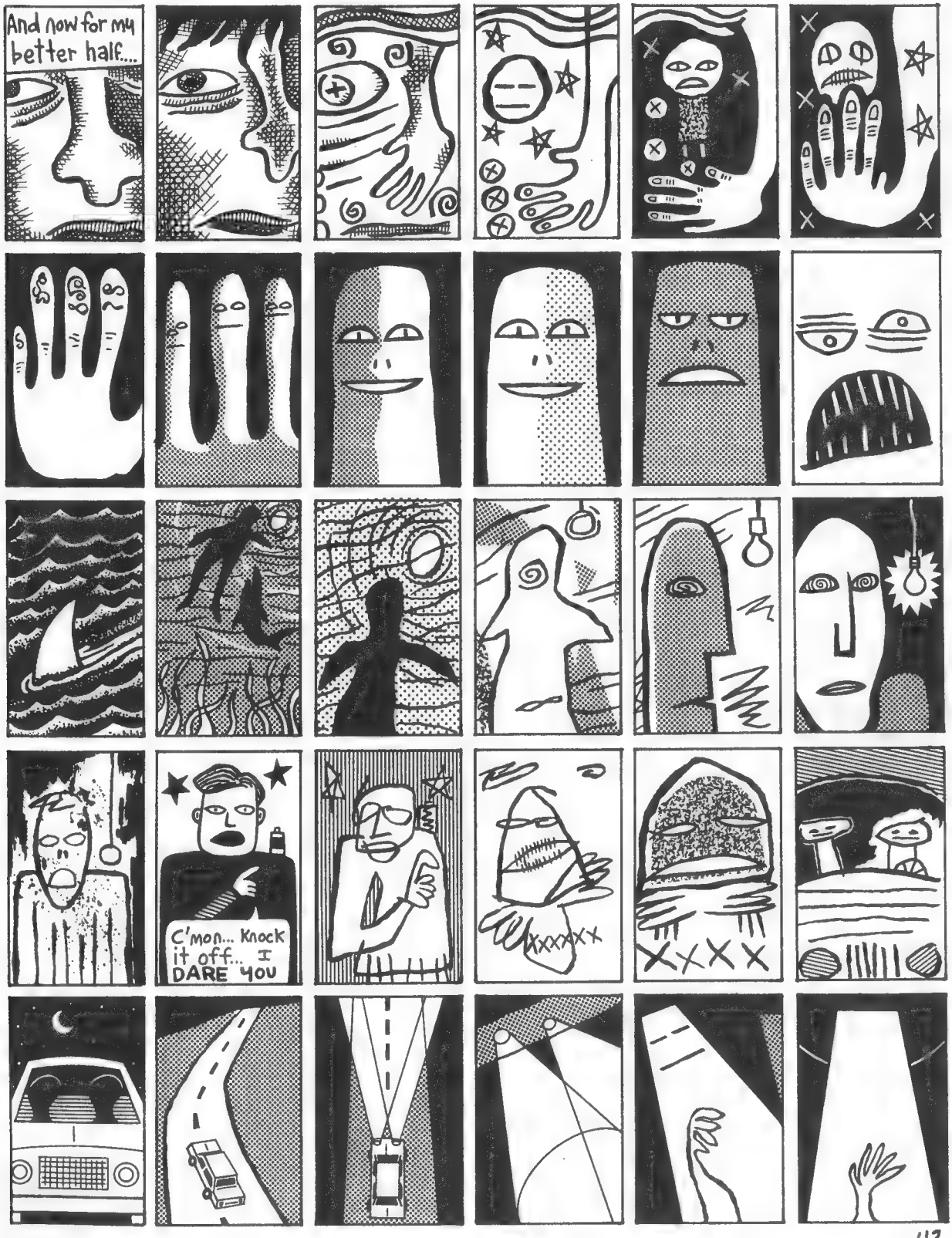
IF YOU STRIKE
THEY CALL YOU SUBVERSIVE
YOU'RE LACKEY
BANG
ENTRY
ENSLAVED WORKERS BY THE TORTURED HANDLES OF THE WATCH!
STRIKE PACIFIC


BUT IF YOU FIND A JOB,
THEY DON'T GIVE YOU DIGNITY
DESPITE THE DIRTY GAWN
AND THE SWEATED FACE ...
EMPLOYES
WORKING SPEED OR ... GO FOR STREET!
BOSS

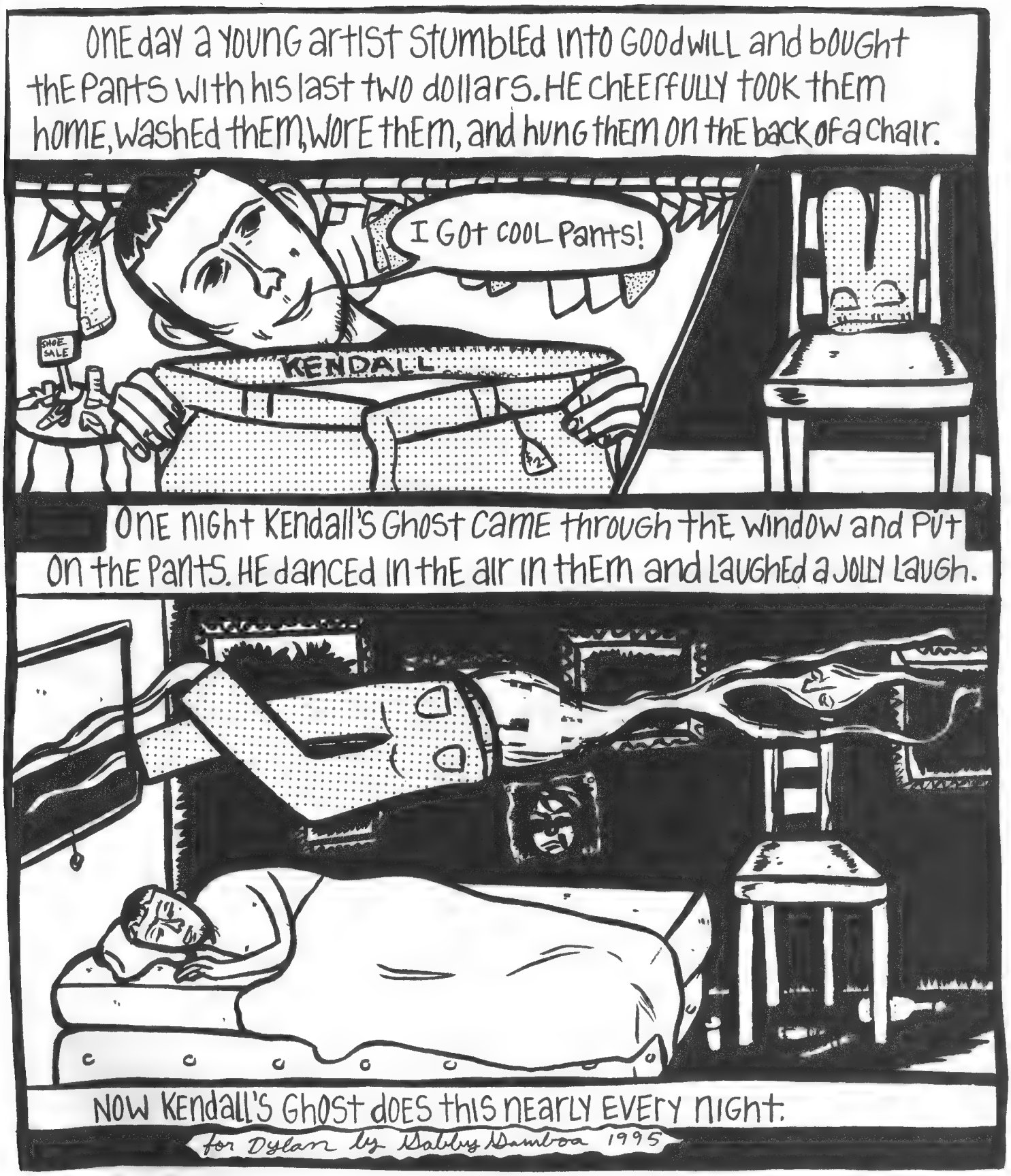
AND THE
SWEATED FACE
...
ROTTEN KID!
PASSED WHOLE LIFE WANTING TO QUESTION IF ALL THIS CRAP I HAVE TO ACCEPT
JM

things

brian marsland



KENDALL TOOK MILK WITH HIS TEA EVERY MORNING OF THE ELEVEN YEARS HE LIVED AT THE EAGLE GLENN CONVALESCENT HOME.
ONE SPRING MORNING KENDALL PASSED AWAY. HIS SOUL PASSED OUT THROUGH HIS NOSE AND HIS BOWELS EMPTIED INTO HIS PANTS, THE PANTS THAT SAID "KENDALL" IN MAGIC MARKER ON THE WAISTBAND.
BY SUNDAY, KENDALL WAS BURIED, AND THE PANTS WERE WASHED AND SENT, WITH THE REST OF HIS CLOTHES, TO THE LOCAL GOODWILL.


ONE day a YOUNG artist STUMBLED INTO GOODWILL and bOUGHT
thE PantS WITH his last TWO dollars. HE CHEERFULLY TOOK thEM
hOME, WASHED thEM, WORE thEM, and hUNG thEM ON thE back OF a CHAIR.
I GOT COOL Pants!
SHOE SALE
KENDALL
$2
ONE NIGHT KENDALL'S GHOST CAME THROUGH THE WINDOW and PUT
ON THE PANTS. HE DANCED IN THE AIR IN THEM and LAUGHED A JOLLY LAUGH.
NOW KENDALL'S GHOST DOES THIS NEARLY EVERY NIGHT.
for Dylan by Dabby Damboa 1995

the World's Greatest Haircut

JIM'S UPTOWN BARBER SHOP
5026 N. CENTRAL AVE., PHOENIX

X-MAS 1993
© Eric Searleman
TOO BIG
ALREADY HAD
ELLA SWINGS BRIGHTLY
TOO SMALL
36 ROLLS
NO NAILS

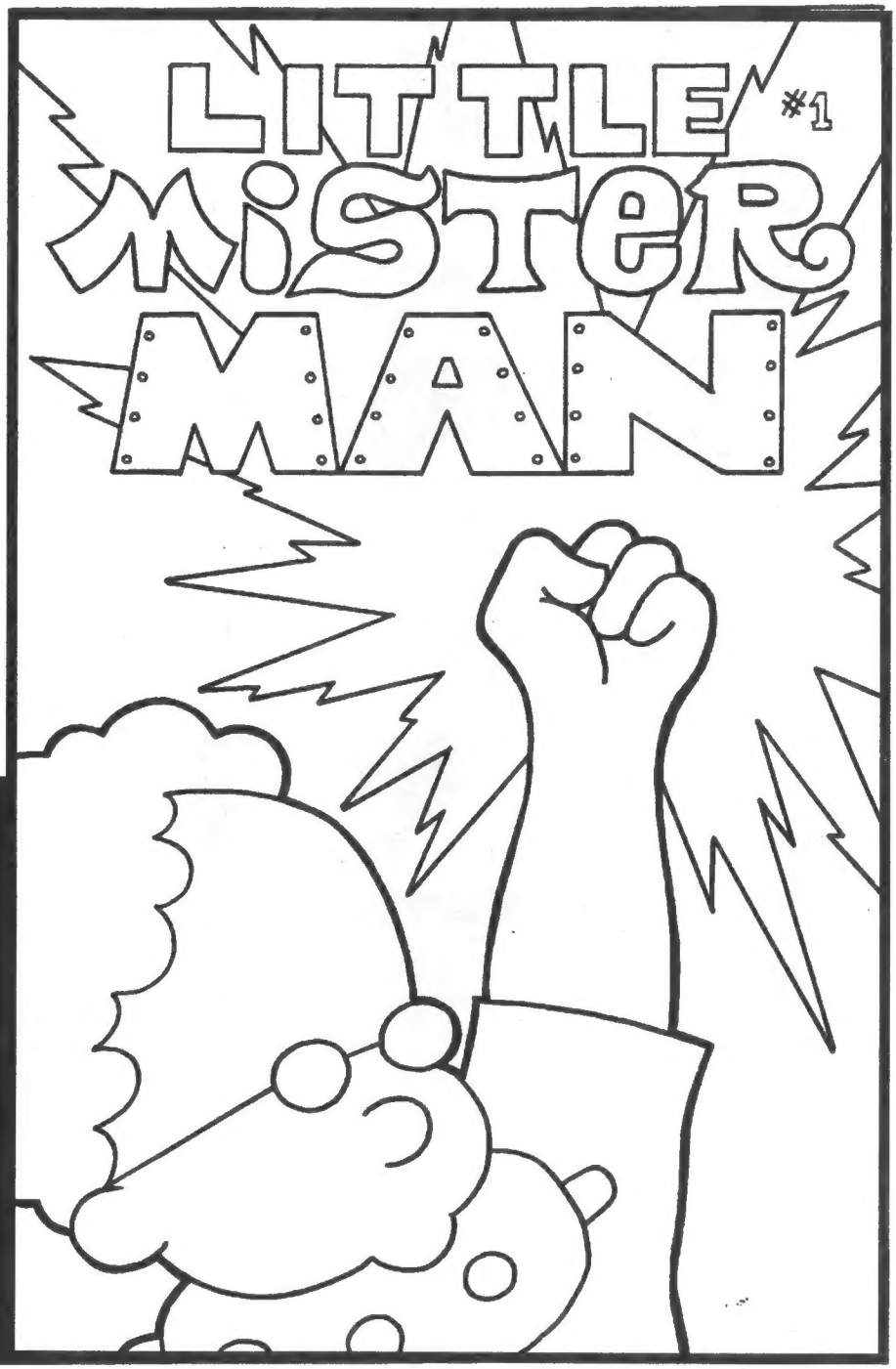
Coming In November from Slave Labor!

Little Mister Man #1

A story about a bad little superpowered boy with a paranoid father and a coddling sympathetic mother.

Taunted by other kids, his only friend is a robot that "Pa" made for his birthday. "Pa" also creates a scientific device that inhibits all Little Mister Man's powers. It's just NOT FAIR!

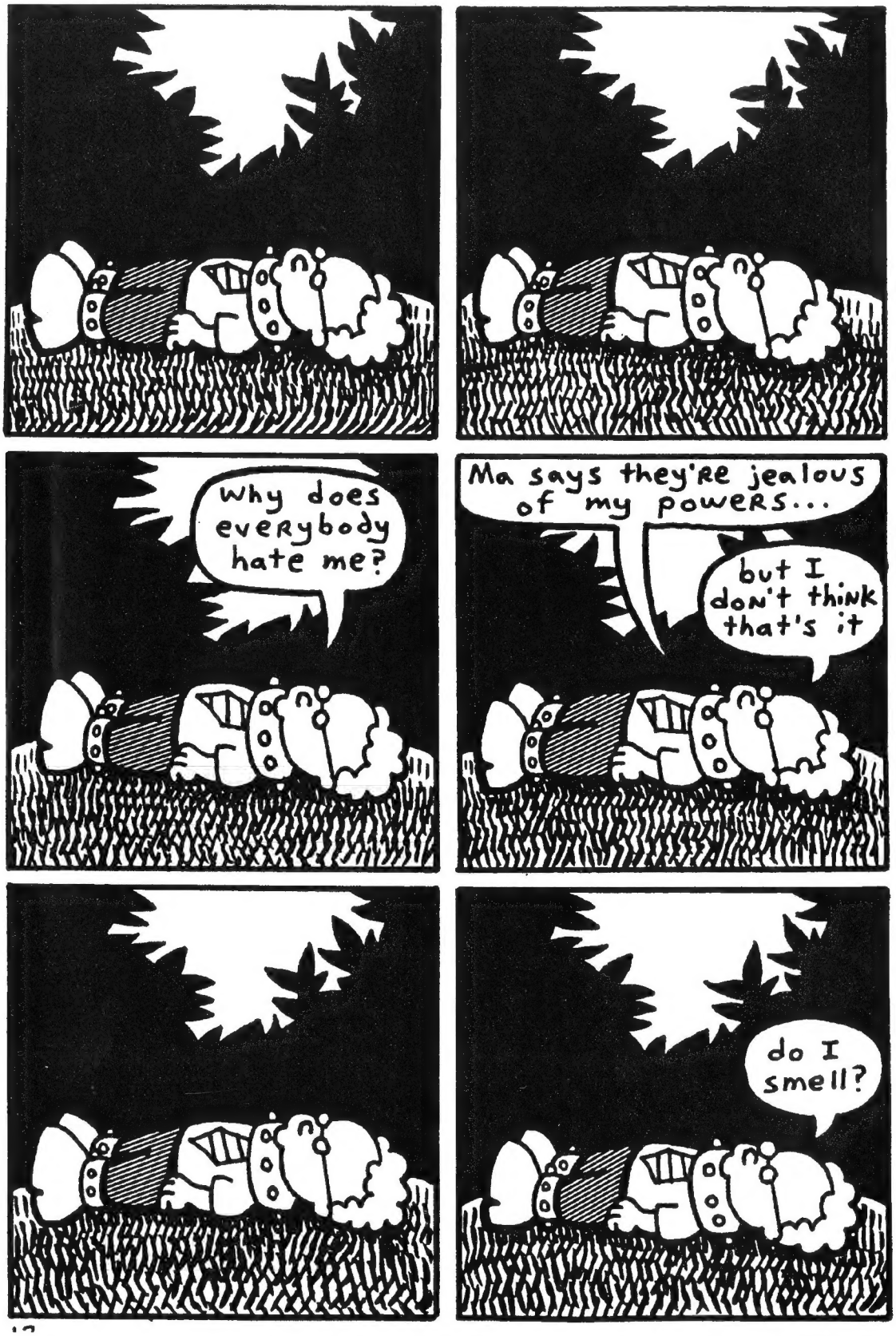
This new MONTHLY mini-series by the creator of the acclaimed **James Kochalka Superstar** is a charming tale of a misunderstood young boy that reads like a dysfunctional Superman for the 90's. The Comics Journal called Kochalka an "excellent cartoonist".



***Artf**k Magazine* said that, "James has a truly unique style that makes you cry at the heavens."

COOL NEW COMIC from Slave Labor!

Coming In November from Slave Labor!



Written & illustrated by James Kochalka, 24 pages, Black & white with color cover - $2.95

COOL NEW COMIC from Slave Labor!

NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

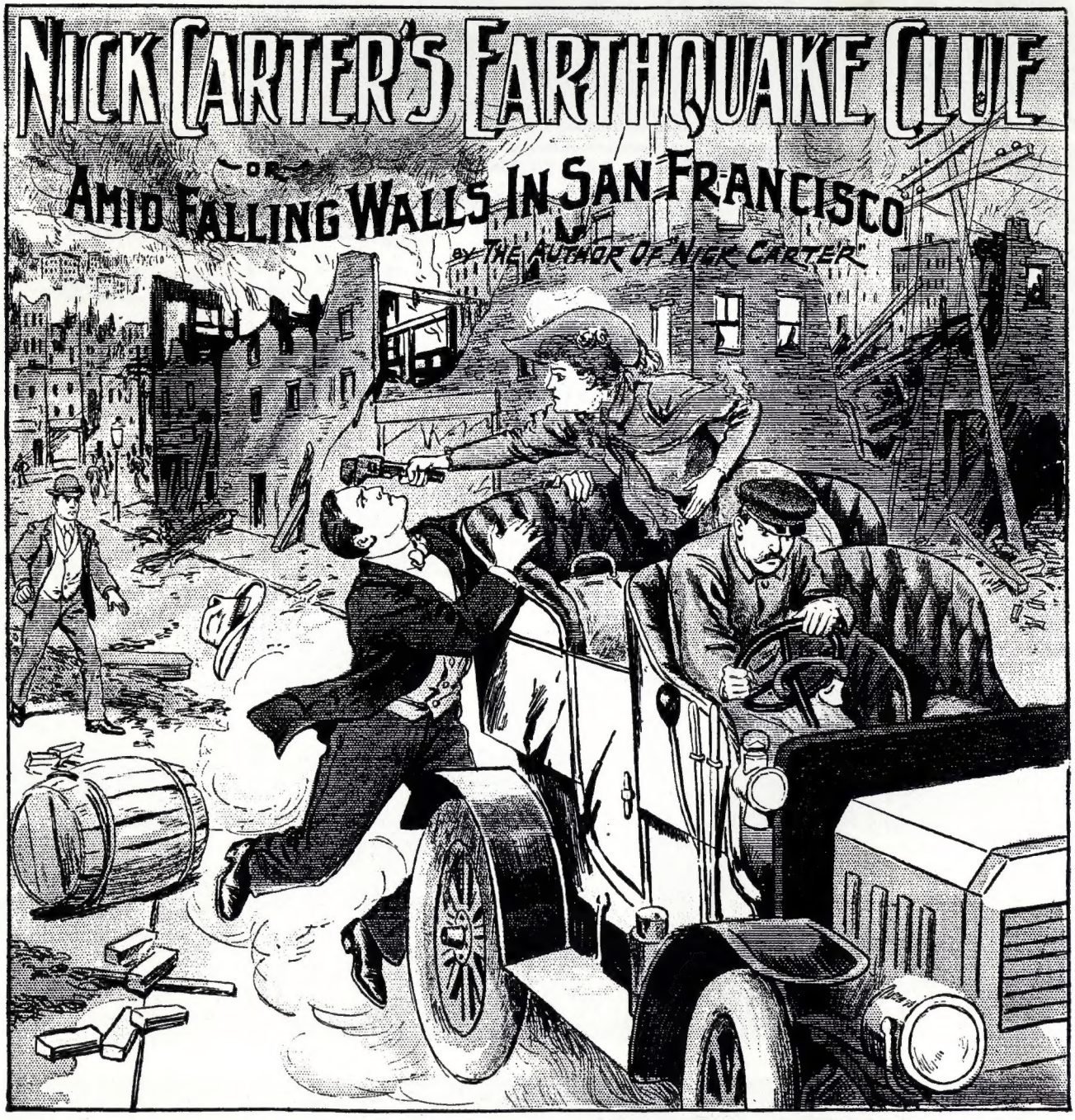
Issued Weekly. By subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Ave., N. Y.

No. 503 NEW YORK, AUGUST 18, 1906. **Price, Five Cents**

NICK CARTER'S EARTHQUAKE CLUE

—OR— AMID FALLING WALLS IN SAN FRANCISCO

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NICK CARTER"



The woman seized a wrench lying at her feet and, leaning over, struck the detective a savage blow between the eyes.